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HISTORY
OF THE
CHURCH OF CHRIST

BY REV. JOSEPH MILNER, A.M.

REV. ISAAC MILNER, D.D., F.R.S.

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BY THE LATE
REV. JOSEPH MILNER, A.M.

WITH ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS, BY THE LATE
REV. ISAAC MILNER, D.D. F.R.S.

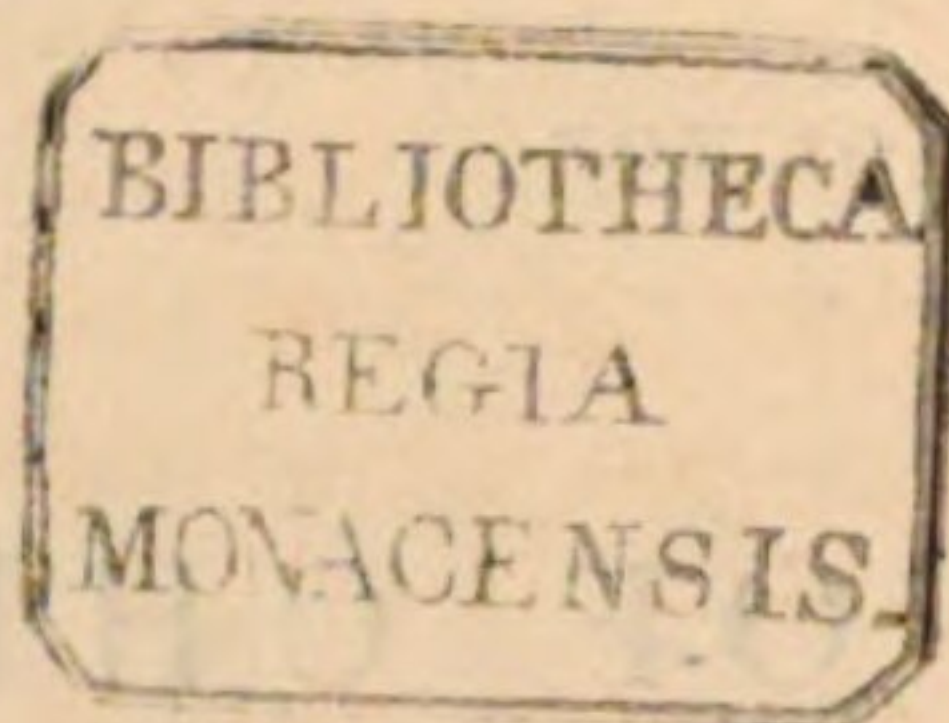
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CENTURY XII.

CHAP. I.

A GENERAL VIEW OF THE LIFE OF BERNARD.

A GREAT luminary strikes our attention at the entrance of this century—the famous Bernard, abbot of Clairval. As the general scene of our history still continues dark and gloomy, let us stick close to the splendid object. At least I would wish to exhibit a just estimate of the life, character, and writings of this renowned saint. For the subject may not only throw a considerable light on the religion and manners of this century, but will also illustrate that connexion between Christian doctrine and practice, which it is the principal design of this work to explore from age to age.

There was a time when Bernard was idolized throughout Europe; while he lived, his word was a law; and, for ages after his death, he was scarcely thought to have been capable either of fault or mistake. But the public taste has long since deviated into the other extreme, and it will behove me to say a few words, with a view to combat that power of prejudice, by which most minds are apt to be carried down the torrent of fashion.

Bernard was doubtless a very ardent champion of the popes of Rome; I mean, of their office, not of their personal characters. He inveighed against the vices of the men, and the various evils of their ecclesiastical administration. But he supported their pretensions to the chair of St. Peter, and opposed with vehemence all who withstood those pretensions. FORGIVE HIM THIS

WRONG : it was common to him with the Christian world ; and the great Saxon Reformer, who, four hundred years after, could see at length, though by slow degrees, the wickedness and folly of the whole established system under which he had been strictly educated, has ever been looked on as a prodigy.

In superstition also Bernard was unhappily involved all his days ; it was the evil of the times. His austerities have, with nauseous punctuality, been recited by his panegyrists*. They might have spared their accounts, as they themselves confess that he afterwards owned he was in an error, both in injuring his own health, and in exacting too much of labour and sufferings from his disciples. Nor is the sincerity of Bernard to be doubted, either in his juvenile zeal, or in his candid and frank confession of his faults†. He even accused himself of sacrilege, because by his indiscreet excesses he had rendered himself almost unfit to serve God and the Church. And though the weakness of his frame continued till death, as the consequence of the injuries which his body had received by his austerities, he seems to have taken some care of health in the latter part of his life.

But the strongest prejudices which we are inclined to admit against him in our times, are derived from his supposed miracles, and from his real attachment to the cause of the Crusades.

In truth, I was disgusted with the tedious perusal of his miracles, with not one of which do I mean to trouble the reader. But Bernard was canonized ; it was therefore necessary, by the etiquette of the Roman See, that a Saint should work miracles ; and no wonder, when the interests of all parties concerned were favourable to fraud, and when credulity was a general evil, that miracles should be feigned, be circumstantially related, and be implicitly believed. Thus Ignatius, the father of the Jesuits, was said, sixty years after his death, to have wrought miracles ; though in his life, published fifteen years after that event, no mention is made of any. Our

* These are several ; the lives of Bernard, which they wrote, are at the close of the 2d Vol. of his Works ; which are in two folios. I use the Parisian edition of Mabillon.

† Vol. II. p. 1094.

king Henry III. was reported to have wrought a miracle after his death, at his tomb. He, also, might have been added to the Roman Calendar, if the imposture had not been detected and exposed by the vigour and sagacity of his son Edward I*. Let Bernard, then, be acquitted of wilful blame on this head, though his panegyrists, it must be owned, have written as absurdly concerning him as if they had intended to disgrace his character.

Of the policy of the Crusades my judgment is not the same as concerning their justice. In the beginning of this century prodigious armies marched out of Europe, to take possession of the Holy Land ; and, notwithstanding the repeated calamities which attended their progress, the princes of the West still persevered in the attempt. That they should single out Palestine as the scene of their military exploits was fanatical and superstitious. The great inconveniences to which they were inevitably exposed, on account of the immense distances from their respective countries, and the want of all political and prudential wisdom in their plans, are evident ; and, in the event, Europe suffered the punishment of their temerity and folly. Add to this, that the improvident waste of so much human blood, on so fantastic an object, and the mixture of profane wickedness with absurd superstition in the Crusaders, rendered their characters, on the whole, as reprehensible as they were ridiculous. But when the precise question is asked, Whether they had a just cause against the Mahometans, I cannot decide, with the generality of modern historians, against them. Perhaps we have too hastily admitted the truth of the accounts which infidel writers, of no very accurate information, have given of the virtues of the Arabians. It is very evident, that in the wars between them and the Christians, the rules of justice and humanity were more frequently and more atrociously violated by the former than by the latter. Even the very degenerate Christianity, which had then for ages obtained, produced a degree of social virtue unknown to the followers of Mahomet. A savage pride, a sanguinary malice, and a shameless

* Fox's Book of Martyrs, Vol. I. 399.

perfidy, marked, with very few exceptions, the general conduct of men, whom Voltaire, with insidious candour, prefers to their Christian adversaries. It should be remembered, that the Mahometans, from the first publication of the Koran, asserted a divine claim to universal empire ; and in their creed unbelieving nations are continually threatened with the loss of their religion, their lives, or at least their liberties. In the eleventh century, the Turks, the successors of the Arabians, both in regard to their empire and their religion, had, in less than thirty years, subdued Asia, as far as the Hellespont*. Yet the same author who gives us this information says the charge alleged against the Mahometans, of looking on it as a duty to extirpate all religions by the sword, is confuted by the Koran, by the history of the Mussulman conquerors, and by the toleration of Christian worship. This observation seems scarcely consistent with the former. To live in slavery, under the Mahometan yoke, was all the indulgence granted to the Christians who sunk beneath their arms ; and as they realized this doctrine at one time, even to the Straits of Gibraltar, as the pilgrims to the Holy Land were exposed to many insults, robberies, and extortions, as both Saracens and Turks acted, from age to age, on the maxims of original Mahometanism, and as, at length, for want of a proper union of the European princes in stemming the torrent, they desolated a great part of Europe itself, it seems agreeable to the law of nations to conclude, that the Christian powers had a right to resist their ambitious pretensions. If this state of the case be just, it is sufficient to vindicate Bernard from the charge of iniquity in encouraging and promoting the Crusades. This is enough for my purpose ; he might, and he doubtless did, mean well in his exhortations on this head ; and it is only to be wished that the enterprize of the Christian princes had been conducted on the plan of defensive prudence, rather than of offensive military enthusiasm. I am not however called on to vindicate Bernard as a politician, but to illustrate his Christian principles.

* Gibbon's Decline, C. 58, V. 6.

Bernard was born at Fontaine, a village of Burgundy, in the year 1091, and was the son of Tecelinus*, a military nobleman, renowned for piety, at least according to the ideas of religion prevalent at that time. The same character is given of his mother Aleth. She had seven children, of whom Bernard was the third. From his infancy he was devoted to religion and study, and made a rapid proficiency in the learning of the times. He took an early resolution to retire from the world, and engaged all his brothers and several of his friends in the same monastic views with himself. The most rigid rules were agreeable to his inclination: and hence he became a Cistercian, the strictest of the orders in France. The Cistercians were at that time but few in number; men were discouraged from uniting with them on account of their excessive austerities. Bernard, however, by his superior genius, his eminent piety, and his ardent zeal, gave to this order a lustre and a celebrity which their institution by no means deserved. At the age of twenty-three, with more than thirty companions, he entered into the monastery. Other houses of the order arose soon after, and he himself was appointed abbot of Clairval†. To those novitiates who desired admission, he used to say, “If ye hasten to those things which are within, dismiss your bodies, which ye brought from the world; let the spirits alone enter: the flesh profiteth nothing.” Strange advice this may seem, and very different from the meekness and facility which our Saviour exhibited towards young disciples‡. Nor would it be worth while to have mentioned it at all, but that it evinces the extreme disadvantages which then attended the pursuit of religious knowledge, and the cultivation of piety. Yet, amidst all these disagreeable austerities, the soul of Bernard was inwardly taught of God; and as he grew in the divine life he gradually learned to correct the harshness and asperity of his sentiments. Finding the novitiates to be terrified at his severe declarations, he used to preach to them the mortification of carnal concupiscence,

* Life of Bernard, by Gulielmus, 1077.

† Life of Bernard, 1085.

‡ Matthew ix. 14.

and lead them on with a mildness and clemency, which, however, he did not exercise toward himself. He injured his health exceedingly by austerities, and, as he afterwards confessed, threw a stumbling-block in the way of the weak, by exacting of them a degree of perfection which he himself had not attained. He had induced all his brethren to follow his example of retirement. They were five in number : and his only sister still remained in the world, who, coming to visit the brethren in the monastery, in the dress and with the attendance of a lady of quality, found herself treated with such neglect, that bursting into tears, she said, “ though I am a sinner, nevertheless for such Christ died.” Bernard, moved with an expression so truly evangelical, remitted his severity, gave her directions suited to the taste of the age, and, probably, still better advice. But of that the miserable writer, whom I follow, says nothing. External austerities are, as it were, the whole of his theology, and having told us, that Bernard’s sister became a nun, and resembled her brothers in piety, he dismisses her from his narrative *.

Bernard, however, having reduced himself to the greatest weakness by his absurd excesses, and being obliged to take more care of his health, was humbled under a sense of his folly, and frankly confessed it in the strongest terms †. He recovered his strength, and began to exert himself by preaching, and travelling from place to place, for the real good of mankind. It is wonderful to observe, with what authority he reigned in the hearts of men of all ranks, and how his word became a law to princes and nobles. His eloquence, indeed, was very great ; but that alone could never have given him so extensive a dominion. His sincerity and humility were eminent, and his constant refusal of the highest ecclesiastical dignities, for which he was, doubtless, as well qualified as any person of his time, gave, in his circumstances, an unequivocal testimony to the uprightness of his character : I say,—in his circumstances,—for I would by no means insinuate, that the acceptance of the highest ecclesiastical dignities manifests, in all cases, a spirit of

* Life of Bernard, 1090.

† Id. 1094.

avarice or ambition. The bishoprics of Genoa, Milan, and Rheims, were among those which he refused to accept.

During a schism, which happened in the Church of Rome, the authority of Bernard determined both Lewis VI. king of France, and Henry I. king of England, to support the claims of Innocent II. This is one instance, among many, of his influence, which was employed in various negotiations, for the good of the Church, as he thought; but of which the detail is very foreign to the views of this history.

That which eminently marked the character of Bernard, amidst the profusion of honours heaped on his character throughout Europe, was his undissembled humility. Though no potentate, whether civil or ecclesiastical, possessed such real power as he did in the Christian world, and though he was the highest in the judgment of all men, he was nevertheless, in his own estimation, the lowest. He said, and he felt what he said; namely, that he had neither the will nor the power to perform the services for which he was so much extolled, but was wholly indebted to the influence of divine grace. At intervals, from the employments of ecclesiastical affairs, he meditated on the subject of the Book of Canticles. The love of Christ towards his Church, his great condescension towards it, though sullied and dishonoured by sin, the reciprocal affection also of the Church towards the divine Saviour, the prelibations of his love afforded toward her, varied however with anxieties and interruptions, these subjects engaged his attention, and he wrote on them in that manner which experience only can dictate*.

Another writer of Bernard's life tells us†, of the excellent dignitaries of the Church, who had received their education in the monastery of Clairval. But as I know nothing of any of them, except one, it must suffice to mention him, pope Eugenius III. From a monk he rose to that height of ecclesiastical dignity; and he still practised the austerities of the convent so far as his

* Life of Bernard, 1123.

† 1127. Life of Bernard, by Ernald.

exalted station admitted ; and we have yet extant five books, addressed to him by Bernard, written with that air of genuine piety and sincerity, which showed that the abbot was no respecter of persons. The pope himself was irreproachable in his manners, continued to reverence the abbot, was zealous toward God, and appears to have far excelled the generality of popes. For the worst thing that can be said of Eugenius was, that he seems to have had no scruples in accepting the pope-

Eugenius
III. becomes
pope,
A. D. 1145.

of ignorance and superstition is compatible with the existence of genuine piety. Eugenius was raised to the pontificate in the year 1145, and governed nine years in a state of splendid misery. Feuds and factions convulsed his government, and he was obliged to fly from Rome into France, to avoid the fury of his enemies. It was probably a blessing in the disguise of afflictions that he was never allowed to taste the sweets of power and grandeur.

Theobald, count of Blois, elder brother to Stephen king of England, was also much guided by the counsels of Bernard, and he was surely a very extraordinary character. Though a powerful prince, he lived in abstemiousness, simplicity, and plainness. Nothing indecent was permitted to be said * or done in his presence. His care and munificence in relieving the afflicted was wonderful : in a famine he opened his store-houses to the poor : his life, in short, was devoted to the service of mankind : and I hope, that agreeably to Ernald's observation, he laid up treasures above. We must, however, be content with details of external things from a writer, who gives no account of the inward vital godliness of his heroes. Theobald also had his share of afflictions, though the account of their nature, and of his relief from them at last, is beyond measure obscure.

The talents of Bernard in preaching, were, doubtless, of the first order. He possessed that variety of gifts which fitted him either to address the great or the vulgar. He knew how to improve conversation to salutary purposes, and to overrule the frivolous trifling of a company

* Life of Bernard, by Ernald, 1129.

by introducing something serious, which yet was of an inviting and an agreeable nature. At the command of the pope, and at the request of other bishops, he was wont to preach in various places; and the impressions left on the congregations, who crowded from all parts to hear him, demonstrated the powers of his eloquence*.

The crusade of Lewis VII. called the younger, was supported by the eloquent voice of Bernard, who unhappily prevailed to draw numbers to join that monarch in his absurd expedition, which was in its consequences pregnant with misery and ruin†. If we had no other apologies for Bernard than those very absurd ones suggested by Gaufrid, it must be confessed he would be totally inexcusable. But in the review of his works we shall have occasion to hear the abbot speak for himself.

CHAP. II.

BERNARD'S DEFENCE OF EVANGELICAL TRUTH AGAINST ABELARD.

THE merits of the controversy between these two great men, can scarcely be appreciated, without some previous review of the life and transactions of the latter. Peter Abelard was born in Brittany, in the year 1079‡. He was, doubtless, a man of genius, industry, and learning. In early life he was put under the tuition of Roscelin, an acute logician, already mentioned, who incorporating his philosophical subtilties with Christian ideas, departed from the simplicity of the faith, and, toward the close of the foregoing century, was condemned for tritheism.

Peter
Abelard
born,
A. D. 1079.

Abelard needed not the instructions of such a master, in order to learn the arts of self-sufficiency. Confident

* Life of Bernard, by Gaufrid. † Id. 1137.

‡ I have been obliged to Mr. Berington's history of this man, for the arrangement of certain facts and circumstances. I scarcely need to say, that I am constrained to differ, *toto cœlo*, from him in sentiments. Nor is it possible that it should be otherwise, where two persons have scarcely one common principle of theology in which they agree.

and presumptuous by nature, elated with applause, and far too haughty to submit to the simple truth, as it is revealed in Scripture, he was, from the moment that he applied himself to the study of the sacred writings, ardently disposed to embrace heretical singularities. After he had appeared in a very splendid light in the schools of philosophy, and had been equally distinguished by his acuteness and by his contentious spirit, he attended the lectures of Anselm* in divinity. What sort of lectures they were we are not told, but I have not the worse opinion of them from the supercilious contempt with which Abelard spake of them. He himself had given very little attention to the sacred books, and yet very speedily decided against his teacher, pronounced him void of reason and common sense, and declared, that, with the assistance of an easy expositor, the Scriptures were perfectly intelligible to any one who had the smallest pretensions to literature. "Are you equal to the work of expounding the Scriptures?" said his companions. "I am ready," said he: "choose any book which you please, from the Old or New Testament, and allow me a single commentator." They instantly fixed on the most difficult of all the prophets, Ezekiel. He studied that night, and next morning declared that he was prepared to expound the prophet: "for it is not by leisure," said he, "but by energy of genius, that I undertake to master the sciences." He exhibited himself in public, lectured repeatedly on Ezekiel, and was admired by his ignorant auditories.

Hitherto every thing seems to be a modern scene. The same juvenile confidence, supported by the same ignorance of themselves, and the same depraved nature, has formed many Socinian and Pelagian preachers and writers in our times, who, between the age of twenty and thirty, have despised the wisdom of antiquity, and the authority of men most justly renowned for good sense, learning, and holiness, and have committed themselves to the direction of plausible and presumptuous innovators, who are often sufficiently artful in beguiling the

* This person must not be confounded with the famous archbishop of Canterbury of that name.

unwary. One of their most successful devices is, they pretend to teach young students of divinity how to think for themselves. It is remarkable, however, that we very seldom find any of those who have gone to visit the sick lion, return from his den. A self-confident spirit naturally leads the mind into opinions the most daringly subversive of the Gospel, as well as into a course of life the most opposite to its precepts. And when a man has begun to despise the influence of the Holy Spirit, he is awfully left at large to his own dark designs, and to the crafts of the prince of darkness. The connexion between doctrines and practice is close and exact. He, who thought highly of himself was easily disposed to think meanly of divine grace; and the best uses of the story of this miserable man are these, to teach youth to be modest, and to inform mankind, whether young or old, that the Scriptures should ever be studied with reverence, humility, and prayer.

Abelard had the baseness to seduce a young woman, named Eloisa, who was brought up in Paris by her uncle. The names of both these persons are familiar to those who have read our poet Pope, and it would be far remote from the plan of this history to enlarge on scenes of so flagitious a nature. Only the real principles of grace, I constantly find, are productive of holy practice. He, who has not seen the evil of sin in his own nature, and the preciousness of the grace of Christ, even while he boasts of his regard to moral virtue, will sport with iniquity, and call evil good, and good evil. The unhappy woman herself learned to glory in her shame, and professed that she thought it an honour to become the harlot of so renowned a person as Abelard. Sin deceives and hardens the heart incredibly; even holy David, for a season, felt its fascinating power; and nothing less than the influence of divine grace can subdue it. Blinded by lust, Abelard and Eloisa felt no remorse for their monstrous treatment of her uncle, whose confidence they abused, and whose kindness they repaid by the most vile and wicked ingratitude. In the mean time, Abelard studied and expounded the prophets, and continued to preach, not the Lord, but himself, as he had ever done. Happy

had it been for the Christian world if there had been no more such theologians. But thus it is with men who speculate on religion at their ease, and make it a vehicle for their own advancement, honour, and wealth. With shameless versatility, they can at one time undertake to explain the Scriptures, at another gratify the lusts of the flesh. With men truly serious for their own souls it is not so : they may be slow in their advances in Christian science ; but their steps are safe ; and, while religion is by them brought to the test of experience, their conduct is preserved in uprightness.

I throw a veil over the particulars of the shameful story. Suffice it to say, that, in the issue, Abelard's projects of ecclesiastical ambition were disappointed, and that both he and the unhappy woman retired into monastic obscurity.

Ambition and the force of an active genius soon engaged Abelard again in theological inquiries. Of all the ancient fathers, Origen most suited his taste ; and, mindful of the instructions of Roscelin, he began to philosophize in public on the doctrines of the Gospel, and composed, in three books, his *Introduction to Theology* ; in which he attempted to render the mysteries of Christianity more agreeable to reason than they had been represented by the ancient fathers. The Trinity, in particular, he describes as a doctrine known to the ancient schools of philosophers, and revealed to them in recompense of their virtues. This is certainly a language very different from that of the Scriptures, which never mention philosophers, except with a view to guard against their seductions, and always represent their views as extremely abhorrent from the doctrines of the Gospel. The modern historian of Abelard is large and diffuse in describing the treatment which his hero met with, but desultory and indistinct in the account which he gives of his real sentiments. He asserts, however, that Abelard was persecuted without cause ; that his book really contained nothing that was expressly heterodox ; and while he positively and decidedly condemns the conduct of his adversaries, he gives his readers no sufficient data by which they may judge for

themselves. But thus it is that heresy has ever been defended. While its WORDS DO EAT AS A CANKER, and gradually pervert the minds of the unwary, every charitable attempt to counteract the poison is treated as bigotry, illiberality, and fanaticism. The praise of good sense and sound argument is considered as appropriate to the heretic. He, at least, is allowed and encouraged to spread his doctrines with freedom, and to asperse the orthodox with the keenest invective; while all who undertake to defend the plain sense of Scripture are stigmatized as persecutors. Scenes of this sort have, to the disgrace of human nature, been renewed from age to age: and so low and mean are the ideas of charity inculcated by those who call themselves liberal, that the real spiritual benefit of thousands seems to them scarcely an object of any magnitude, compared with the personal reputation of the applauded heretic.

Let us then endeavour to give, from the best evidences, a distinct view of the leading sentiments of Abelard, that we may be enabled to form a just idea of the controversy which at present engages our attention. I have drawn them from the history of Alexander Natalis*; and the testimonies both of Abelard himself, and of Bernard his opponent, are introduced into this account.

1. Abelard distinguished the persons of the Trinity in this manner. He described God the Father to be FULL POWER, the Son to be a CERTAIN POWER, the Holy Spirit to be NO POWER. He said, "the Son was to the Father as a CERTAIN POWER to power, as species to genus, as materiatum to materia, as man to an animal, as a brazen seal to brass."

I suppose, were I to translate the Latin words of this passage, for the sake of the less learned reader, I should make no addition to his stock of knowledge.

2. He represented the Holy Spirit to have proceeded from the Father and the Son, but not from the substance of the Father and the Son. Let this article pass as an unintelligible subtilty, if the reader please. The next speaks plainly a sentiment which strikes at the root of Christianity.

* Alexand. Nat. 12th Cent.

3. He denied that the devil ever had any commanding effective influence over man, and therefore he denied that the Son assumed flesh for the sake of freeing man from the devil. God appeared, said he, in flesh, for no other end than for our instruction by word and example, nor did he suffer and die for any other reason, than to show and recommend his love toward us. I scarcely need to say, that this is the very essence of Socinianism.

That I have not mistaken the meaning of Abelard will further appear from a view of his reasonings against the doctrine of atonement. “How is it possible that God should be reconciled to us by the death of his Son, since, in all reason, he ought to have been more incensed against men for the murder of his Son than for the violation of his precept by the eating of a single apple? If Adam’s sin could not be expiated but by the death of Christ, what expiation could be made for the horrid crime of murdering Christ himself? Could the death of an innocent Son be so pleasing to God, that he would be reconciled to us men on the commission of it?—Who does not see, that it is cruel and unjust, that any one should require the blood of the innocent? How much less could God be so pleased with such an action, as to be reconciled on account of it to the whole world?” Thus far Abelard*. Socinians have never said any thing more specious. To those, who know how to reverence divine wisdom, and to submit to the express word of God, such reasonings will appear unworthy of an answer. What I am concerned for at present is, to state the fact, that Abelard was a heretic, that Bernard did not accuse him either unjustly or precipitately; and that the assertion of the historian of Abelard†, namely, that his hero “was not guilty of a single error,” is altogether unfounded.

It may be proper to add, that Abelard, having set aside the Scripture doctrine of an atonement, gives it as his opinion, that the real cause and design of Christ’s incarnation was, that he might illuminate the world with the light of his wisdom, and inflame it to the love of God.

* Bern. Vol. I. 647.

† History of Abelard and Eloisa, p. 278.

4. He affirmed that the Holy Spirit was the soul of the world. A phrase much used by the philosophers.

5. He asserted, that Christ, God and man, is not a third person in the Trinity, and that God is not properly to be called man.

6. That by free-will, without the help of grace, we can both will and perform that which is good, in direct contradiction to the seventh Chapter to the Romans.

7. That in the sacrifice of the altar, there remains, in the air, the form of the former substance.

8. That not the fault but the penalty of original sin is derived from Adam.

9. That there is no sin, except in the full consent of the man, and that consent attended with or implying a contempt of God.

10. That no sin is committed by concupiscence, inward delight in evil, or ignorance. However obscurely he expresses himself, he evidently lessens the demerit of sinful thoughts.

11. That diabolical suggestions are made, in a natural way on men, by the contact of stones and herbs, as the sagacious malice of evil spirits knows how to suit the various efficacy of these things to the production of various vices.

12. Faith he called an estimation or opinion of things not seen. "As if," says * Bernard, "a man might think and speak, in matters of faith, what he pleases, or, as if the Sacraments of our faith were not sure and certain in their nature. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are children of God. The whole object of faith is divinely confirmed by prophecies and miracles, established and consecrated by the incarnation, bloody death, and glorious resurrection of the Redeemer. How can any man give to so divine a principle as the faith of the Gospel, so low and mean a title as opinion, except one who hath not received the Holy Spirit, or who is ignorant of the Gospel, or who looks on it as a fable?" The difference between divine and human faith in the

* I anticipate the sentiments of Bernard in this place: more of his arguments against Abelard will be given, when we come to the account of his opposition to the heretic.

Christian religion is here not improperly stated by Bernard.

13. In commenting on the epistle to the Romans, Abelard thus expresses himself: "Since the divine compassion, by bare intuition, could have freed man from the devil, what necessity, what reason, or what need was there, that, for our redemption, the Son of God should assume our nature, should sustain so many and so great miseries, and the painful and ignominious death of the Cross? To us the reason seems to be as follows,—that our justification by his blood, and our reconciliation to God, consisted in this singular grace exhibited to us, namely, in his taking upon him our nature, and in his persevering by word and example even to death, in instructing us*."

"Thus he drew his true disciples the more closely to himself by love. Our redemption, therefore, consists in that great love excited in us by the passion of Christ, which not only frees us from the servitude of sin, but gives us the liberty of the sons of God."

In another place, he says, "Though our doctors, since the days of the Apostles, are of different sentiments, I think the devil had no effective power over man, except a permissive power from God, as a gaoler†, nor did the Son of God assume flesh that he might free men from slavery."

14. He asserts, that fresh continued influences of divine grace are not necessary to the production of every single good action, contrary to the plain sense of the parable of the vine and its branches, and our Lord's own explication of it in John xv.

I might add also another sentiment of Abelard, namely, "that God does no more for him, who is saved, than for him who is not saved." He argues, that "if

* Observe how the idea of atonement is excluded, to make way for that of instruction, while evangelical terms are still used. Some of the other articles are nugatory or obscure; this is palpably plain, and of essential importance in the controversy. In the same light the opposition which he makes, in a great degree, to the work of the Holy Spirit, is to be considered.

† He plainly misrepresents the ancient doctors; none of whom assign any other sort of power to Satan; but by this misrepresentation he speciously introduces his opposition to the doctrine of the atonement.

man be naturally more prone to evil than to good, his sins merit no blame; nay, that* God himself seems blameable for making him so weak and frail." Humble and intelligent Christians know how to answer; "Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" And, moreover, they will, with great truth, contend that such men as Abelard ought not to complain that the character of humble and sincere Christians is denied to them, and that their invectives against their opponents are not only unfounded, but also prove themselves to be void of integrity and candour, because they endeavour to impose on mankind by pretending to be what they are not.

On the whole, it seems impossible, that a man who had known any thing of the power of native depravity, should have advanced such sentiments as Abelard published to the world. Still, if he had kept his thoughts to himself, or had even been a modest inquirer, and proposed his doubts for the sake of information from persons better versed than himself in theological inquiries, his sentiments would have been no proper object of an ecclesiastical council. But Abelard had proceeded to assume the character of a teacher; and what fundamental doctrine of Christianity had he not opposed? The views of the Trinity had been either perverted under his hands, or confounded with the speculations of philosophers. The atonement of Christ, on which alone the hope and comfort of real Christians, in all ages, depends, had, in effect, been denied: the efficacious influence of divine grace had been asserted to be, in many cases at least, unnecessary; and the fallen state of man by nature had been excluded from his creed. If he had renounced the Christian name, at the same time that he renounced the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, he would have merited the character of an honest man; and, by separating himself from Christian society, would have prevented the weak and the unwary from being imposed on by his notions. But such candour and frankness seldom belong to the character of heretics: strict truth and plain dealing in religious matters are scarcely to be expected from any but those who are humble before God,

* Bern. 647. Vol. I.

and sanctified by his truth. Why Abelard chose still to call himself a Christian is obvious; his schools would have been deserted if he had acted openly and honestly. Unless then it can be proved that there are no fundamental truths of Scripture, or, that all sentiments are equally insignificant, it behoved the rulers of the Church, from every principle of piety and charity, to take cognizance of the growing heresy.

A council was held at Soissons, and Abelard was summoned to appear. He was charged with tritheism, and with having asserted that God the Father was alone Almighty. He was ordered to burn his volumes, and to recite the symbol of Athanasius. He obeyed both the mandates, and, after a short confinement, was set at liberty. I am not disposed to approve of all the steps taken by this council. I only maintain, that the principle of their proceedings was just and equitable. Every person who is a member of any society, religious or civil, would own, if a similar occasion presented itself, that he had a right to require the treacherous member who had laboured to subvert that society, either publicly to retract his sentiments, or to submit to a decree of expulsion.

But Abelard, in his own account of the transaction, largely descants on the iniquity and imperiousness of the Synod. The acrimonious invective, the airs of triumph on occasion of little advantages gained by himself in the course of the debate, the shrewdness of his cavils, and above all, the dexterous evasion of the main points on which the controversy rests, these things appear on the face of his narrative, and are so exactly similar to the conduct of modern heretics, much better known to the world, that I may well be spared the recital of them. Moreover, want of sincerity, as well as of temper, is so evident in the narrative of Abelard, that we can lay no decisive stress on his testimony in things with which his own character is concerned. Indeed the want of honesty and veracity appears to have been most striking features in this ingenious and learned disputant.

A commentary on the Epistle to the Romans was also published by Abelard, to which, in an introductory pre-

Council of
Soissons.

face, he has prefixed an observation on the comparative value of the Gospels and the Epistles. "The former, he thinks, are designed to teach those things which every Christian ought to know; the latter to inculcate a strict attention and obedience to them. These last," says he, "contain some wholesome documents and advice, which, though they appertain not to the essence of belief, may serve to embellish the Christian establishment, and to develop its tenets." This is the method of speaking usual with Socinians, namely, to undervalue the authority of some parts of Scripture, compared with others, as if holy men of God did not speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost with equal authority through the whole of the sacred volume. It is not necessary to give any other account of the commentary than that which the reader may conjecture for himself from the view already stated of the leading sentiments of the author.

Bernard, paying a visit to the nunnery of the Paraclete, over which Eloisa presided, was heard from the pulpit by the abbess and her nuns with admiration. He read and approved of their laws and institutes, which had been drawn up by Abelard. He objected only to one phrase in their repetition of the Lord's Prayer. For the common expression DAILY, in the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread," they had been taught to say super-substantial bread. Abelard it seems, had literally followed the etymology of the Greek word *; seduced, I suppose, by the Aristotelian chimeras, which relate to substance. The plain mind of Bernard, attending to sense and utility, rather than to sound and glitter, revolted against the innovation; and, while he spoke with a respectful deference of the man, and commended every thing else relating to the nunnery, he expressed his disapprobation of the unusual term. When Abelard heard of it, his pride took fire; he wrote to Bernard a warm expostulation, and, by undertaking to show the superior authority of St. Matthew to St. Luke, he endeavoured to support the propriety of the term super-substantial. Here again appeared the Socinian mode of undervaluing one part of Scripture, in comparison of another. This is the

* *Επισσιον*.

first instance recorded of an open altercation between Bernard and Abelard. For I find, at least, no decisive proof of any opposition made, as yet, by the former, to the publications of the latter. On the contrary, Bernard was hitherto far from being clear in his own judgment concerning the real theological character of Abelard; and of his caution and charity we shall presently see abundant proofs. The little story which has been told is trifling in its own nature, if any thing can be called trifling which illustrates the human character, and displays the connexion between doctrine and disposition, which was never more apparently exhibited than in the transactions of Abelard.

The council of Soissons had been held in the year 1121. It was a long time after this that Bernard took any particular notice of Abelard. Either he had heard little of the controversy, or had not thought himself called on to deliver his sentiments. Abelard, however, notwithstanding his retractations, persevered in teaching his heresies; and it became, at length, impossible for his errors to escape the observation of the abbot of Clairval.

About the year 1139*, William, abbot of St. Thierry, alarmed at the growing progress of Abelard's doctrine, wrote to Geofry, bishop of Chartres, and to Bernard, entreating them to undertake the defence of divine truth. "God knows I am confounded," said he, "when I, who am 'no man †,' am compelled to address, on a subject of urgent importance, you and others, whose duty it was to speak, though hitherto ye have been silent‡. For when I see the faith of our common hope grievously and dangerously corrupted, without resistance, and without contradiction, that faith, which Christ hath consecrated for us with his blood, for which Apostles and martyrs contended even to death, which holy teachers defended with much labour and fatigue, and transmitted entire and uncorrupt to these dregs of time, I feel a distress

* Bern. Opera. Vol. I. p. 303.

† Psalm, xxii.

‡ Hence it is evident that Bernard had not yet distinguished himself in this controversy, though it must have been of above eighteen years' standing. A plain proof of his caution and modesty.

which constrains me to speak. I could wish, if it were necessary, even to lay down my life for it. They are no small objects which I lay before you: the faith of the Holy Trinity, the person of the Mediator, the Holy Spirit, the grace of God, the sacrament of our common redemption, are the subjects which engage my attention. For Peter Abelard again teaches and writes novelties: his books cross the seas, and pass over the Alps: and his new sentiments concerning the faith are carried into provinces and kingdoms, are preached to crowded audiences, and are openly defended; they are even said to have made their way into the court of Rome. I say to you both, your silence is dangerous, both to yourselves and to the Church of God—I tell you, this monster is as yet in labour; but if he be not prevented, he will produce a poisonous serpent, for which no charmer can be found.

“ I lately met with ‘The Theology of Peter Abelard.’ I confess this title made me curious to read. I have sent you the books, with my remarks; whether there is a just cause for my apprehensions, judge ye. As new terms and new ideas disturbed my spirit, and I had no one before whom I could freely unbosom my thoughts, I have applied myself to you, and implore you to defend the cause of God and the whole Latin Church. The man fears you, and dreads your authority. For, indeed, almost all the champions of divine truth being deceased, a domestic enemy hath invaded the defenceless state of the Church, and hath betaken himself to a singular method of teaching; dealing with Scripture, as he used to do with logic, by introducing his own inventions and novelties: a censor, not a disciple of the faith, a corrector, not a follower.”

He then mentions the heads of the heresy, which he had discovered, and which were much the same as those which have already been described, and he promises to enlarge in writing on the same argument, “with the help of Him, in whose hand are both we and our words.” “Nor,” says he, “do I value your being offended at my language, provided I please you in the doctrine. If I can convince you that I am justly moved, I trust you

also will be moved, and, in an important cause like this, will not fear to part with him, though he be a foot, a hand, or even an eye. I myself have loved him, and wish to do so still, God is my witness : but in this cause I see neither relation nor friend."

Bernard read the book which William sent, and returned this answer : " I think your zeal both just and necessary : that it was not idle, the book, which you have sent me, demonstrates. In this book you effectually stop the mouths of gainsayers : not that I have given it that accurate survey, which you desire ; but I own I am pleased with it, even from a cursory reading, and I think the arguments solid and convincing. But as I have not been accustomed to trust to my own judgment, especially in things of so great importance, I believe the best way would be for you and me to meet, and talk over the subject. Yet even this, I think, cannot be done till after Easter, lest the devotions of the holy season be distracted. But I must beseech you to have patience with me, and to pardon my silence on the subject, since I was hitherto ignorant of most if not all the particulars. As to that which you exhort me to, God is able to inspire me with his good Spirit through your prayers."

Bernard, having at length made himself master of the subject, and being impressed with its magnitude, resolved to exert himself on the occasion. He first held a private conference with Abelard, and admonished him, in a friendly manner, to correct his errors. But this first attempt being fruitless, he took two or three persons with him, according to the precept of the Gospel ; and, in their presence, expostulated with the innovator*. Finding his endeavours to be unsuccessful, and observing, on accurate inquiry, how much the evil spread, it now became a question with Bernard, whether he ought to sacrifice the honour of God and the good of souls to the humour of an artful and obstinate heretic. As a conscientious spirit, like his, was obliged to decide this question in the negative, and as he had sufficiently exculpated himself from the charge of personal malice, or blind precipitation, he began to warn the disciples of Abelard

* Bern. Opera. Vol. I. p. 310.

against the errors of their master, and, as far as in him lay, to guard the Christian world against the growing heresy.

He wrote to pope Innocent in these terms: "Another foundation is laid than that which has been laid for us. A new creed is coined in France: virtues and vices are discussed, not according to rules of morality: the Sacraments are treated unfaithfully; and the mystery of the Holy Trinity is investigated, not in simplicity and sobriety, but in a manner contrary to that which we have received. Our theologian, with Arius, disposes of the Trinity by degrees and measures: with Pelagius, prefers free-will to grace; with Nestorius, divides Christ, and excludes the man Christ Jesus from all connexion with the Trinity*."

To another bishop he wrote thus: "The dragon had been silent many days; but, when he was silent in Britain†, he conceived iniquity in France. The man boasts, that he hath infected the court of Rome with the poison of his novelty: that he hath dispersed his books among the Romans: and he assumes those as the patrons of his error, by whom he ought to be condemned. May God defend that Church for which he died, that he may present it to himself, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing‡."

Let this suffice for a specimen of the glowing language of Bernard; too vehement, perhaps, but surely kindled by the fire of charity. Those, however, alone can judge of the spirit of the man with candour and equity, who feel the importance of divine truth. Humanly speaking, the errors of Abelard, aided by the propensities of our depraved nature, might in a silent and gradual manner have pervaded all Europe, and the propagation of Socinianism might have been matured six centuries ago, if the mischief had not been thus vigorously opposed.

In the archiepiscopal city of Sens, a superstitious ceremony, namely, the translation of a saint's body into the cathedral Church, was to be performed in the year

* Bern. Opera. Vol. I. p. 306.

† He alludes to the Pelagian heresy, which had flourished in Britain.

‡ Bern. Opera. Vol. I. p. 307.

Abelard
challenges
Bernard,
A. D. 1140.

1140. Abelard, incensed at the open and repeated opposition of Bernard, challenged him to make good his charges of heresy at this solemn assembly. Undoubtedly he proceeded regularly in the formality of the challenge. For he implored the archbishop of Sens to cite his accuser before the assembly, and promised to meet him. The archbishop wrote to Bernard accordingly, and named the day on which he should expect to see him. Bernard seems to have been considerably embarrassed at this step. His good sense enabled him to see the difference between popular preaching, and close scholastical argumentation. He had been habituated to the former: with the latter he was unacquainted: and, he knew that Abelard excelled all men in the arts of controversy, in which also age and experience would give him a great advantage over a young antagonist. Bernard, therefore, at first refused to appear. "I was but a youth," says he, in his own account of this matter, "and he a man of war from his youth *. Besides, I judged it improper to commit the measures of divine faith, which rested on the foundations of eternal truth, to the petty reasonings of the schools. I said, that his own writings were sufficient to accuse him, and that it was not my concern, but that of the bishops, to decide concerning his tenets."

Elated at the apparent pusillanimity of Bernard, Abelard collected his friends, spake in a strong tone of victory, and appealed to many concerning the justice of his cause. "What things he wrote of me to his scholars," says Bernard, "I love not to relate. He took care to spread the news every where, that he would answer me at Sens on the day appointed. I yielded, however, though with tears and much reluctance, to the advice of my friends. They saw that all men were going, as it were, to the spectacle, to behold the combatants. What would they say, if one of them did not appear? The people would stumble, the adversary would triumph, and error would grow stronger, if none should appear to answer and to confute. Moved by these reasons, I determined at length to meet Abelard at the time and

* Bern. Opera. Vol. I. p. 183.

place, with no other preparation than that Scripture-promise, do not premeditate, how you may answer; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall say; and that other, the Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me*."

The assembly was splendid. Lewis VII. was there with his nobles; the archbishop with the bishops of his diocese, many abbots, professors, and in general all the learned of France were present.

The superstitious ceremony being performed on the first day, on the second the two abbots appeared, and every eye was fixed on them. The whole assembly was suspended in expectation of the contest. Bernard arose, and in a modest and diffident manner declared; "I accuse not this man; let his own works speak against him. Here they are, and these are the propositions extracted from them. Let him say, I wrote them not, or let him condemn them, if they be erroneous, or let him defend them against my objections." He then delivered the charges to the promoter, who began distinctly to read them. He had not read far, when Abelard arose. "I appeal," said he, "to the pope," and refusing to hear any more, began to leave the assembly. The assembly was astonished at the unexpected step. "Do you fear," said Bernard, "for your person? you are perfectly secure; you know that nothing is intended against you: you may answer freely, assured of a patient hearing†." "I have appealed to the court of Rome," cried the appalled heretic, and withdrew.

Bernard, in writing the account of these transactions to the pope, gives it as his opinion, that the procedure of Abelard was unjustifiable, to appeal from judges, of whom he had himself made choice‡.

If the issue of the conference between these two renowned antagonists had been such as to disappoint the reader's expectations, something, however, divinely instructive, may be learned from the narrative. I know nothing in Bernard's history more decisively descriptive of his character, than his conduct in this whole transaction.

* Bern. Opera. Vol. I. p. 183.

† Vita Bern. Vol. II. p. 1138.

‡ Id. 183.

By nature, sanguine and vehement; by grace and self-knowledge, modest and diffident; he seems, on this occasion, to have united boldness with timidity, and caution with fortitude. It was evidently in the spirit of the purest faith in God, as well as in the most charitable zeal for divine truth, that he came to the contest; while Abelard, who, presumptuous through a long course of scholastic honours, came elated and self-confident, drooped in the very crisis which called for his eloquence and resources. His courage seems to have failed him; or, perhaps the consciousness of real heresy made him incapable of standing before a distinct and orderly examination. At any rate, the humble was exalted, and the proud was disgraced, according to the maxims of the Gospel; and the conduct of the men was a precise counterpart of the doctrines which they severally espoused.

The bishops of France wrote to the pope an account of the procedure; and, in their words, I shall recite the little that remains to be mentioned of the acts of the assembly.

Having given an account of the conduct of Bernard, perfectly agreeable to that which we have heard from the abbot himself, they observe, that "he certainly appeared at Sens, inflamed with pious fervour, nay, unquestionably with the fire of the Holy Spirit*." And they proceed as follows:

"As Abelard's sentiments were read over and over in public audience, and as the arguments of Bernard, partly built on the most solid reasons, partly on the authorities of Augustine and other holy fathers, convinced the synod, that the tenets, which he opposed, were not only false but also heretical, we, sparing the man out of deference to the apostolic See, condemned the opinions. We entreat you to confirm our decrees, and to impose silence on the author of the books, in order to prevent the pernicious consequences with which his errors may be attended."

In what manner Bernard disproved the tenets of Abelard before the council, may be judged from the following brief review of his long epistle to the pope †.

* Vita Bern. Vol. II. p. 1131.

† Bern. Vol. I. p. 650.

“The new theologist of France is one, who scorns to be ignorant of any thing in heaven above, or in earth beneath; to one point only, himself and his own ignorance, he is perfectly blind. While he is prepared to give a reason for every thing, he presumes things above reason, and contrary both to reason and to faith. We ought to consider that Mary is commended, because she prevented reasoning by faith*, and that Zachariah was punished, because he tempted a faithful God by reasonings. Abraham also is extolled, who believed in hope against hope.

“But our theologist says, ‘What does it profit, if what we teach cannot be rendered intelligible?’ Thus promising, perfectly to explain mysterious things, he places degrees in the Trinity, measures in the Divine Majesty, and numbers in eternity. In the very entrance on his work, he defines faith to be ‘an estimation or an opinion.’ But Christian faith has no such limits. Let estimation and opinion belong to the academies, whose character it is to doubt of all things; to know nothing. I shall follow the sentiments of the Apostle of the Gentiles, and know that I shall not be confounded. His definition of faith, I own, is agreeable to me: Faith is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen. Substance of things hoped for; not a fancy of empty conjectures. The idea of substance is connected with something certain and fixed. Faith is not opinion, but certainty. I shall not dwell upon a number of nugatory speculations, in which, while he labours to make Plato a Christian, he makes himself a pagan. I come to more weighty matters. I have read in a certain book of his sentences, and in his exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, that he holds an original sentiment concerning the mystery of our redemption: namely, that the ancient doctors were unanimous in their mode of interpretation concerning the subject, that they all held in such a manner; but, that he holds in a different manner. And art thou he, who constructest for us a new Gospel? Thou hast discovered, it seems, that the Son of God did not assume flesh, that he might free man

* Luke i. 38.

from the devil. Let them give thanks, says the Psalmist, whom the Lord hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy *. This thou wouldst not deny, if thou wert not under the power of the enemy. Thou canst not give thanks with the redeemed, who art not thyself redeemed. That man seeks not for redemption, who knows not himself to be a captive. But those, who do know, cry to the Lord; and the Lord hears them, and redeems them from the hand of the enemy. Hear an Apostle: "If God, peradventure, may give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will †." Hearest thou these words, AT HIS WILL, and dost thou deny the power of the devil?—Hear the Lord himself. He is called by him, the prince of this world ‡, and the STRONG MAN ARMED, AND THE POSSESSOR OF GOODS §; and dost thou say, that he has no power over men?—This power of Satan was known to the Apostle, when he said, "who delivered us from the powers of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son ||."—Let him learn, therefore, that the devil has not only power, but a just power over men. Though the devil himself, who invaded us, is not just; but God who exposed us to him, is just.

"Man was then justly enslaved, but mercifully delivered: with such mercy, however, that justice appeared even in his deliverance. For what could man do of himself, to recover lost righteousness, being now a bond-slave of the devil? Another's righteousness is therefore assigned to him after he had lost his own. The prince of this world came, and found nothing in Christ ¶; and, when he still would lay violent hands on the innocent, most justly he lost the captives, whom he possessed; and that Being upon whom death had no just claim, having unjustly suffered the pains of death, by this voluntary submission justly freed from the debt of death, and from the dominion of the devil, him who was legally obnoxious to both. Man was the debtor: man also paid the debt. For, if one died for all, then were all dead **,

* Ps. cvi. 6. † 2 Tim. ii. 25. ‡ John xiv. 30. § Luke xi. 21.

Coloss. i. 13.

¶ John xiv. 30.

** 2 Cor. v. 15.

that the satisfaction of one might be imputed to all, as he alone bore the sins of all; and now he, who offended, and he who satisfied divine justice, are found the same; because the head and the body is one Christ. The head then satisfied for the members, Christ for his own bowels, since, according to St. Paul's Gospel, which fully confutes the error of Abelard, God hath quickened us together with him, who died for us, having forgiven us all trespasses, blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances, nailing it to his cross, and spoiling principalities and powers *. May I be found among those spoils of which adverse powers are deprived! If I be told, your fathers enslaved you, I answer, my brother hath redeemed me. Why may not I have another's righteousness imputed, since I have another's sin imputed to me? Is there sin in the seed of the sinner, and not righteousness in the blood of Christ?—As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. The fault has truly laid hold of me, but grace has also visited me. If the judgment was by one to condemnation, the free-gift was of many offences to justification †. Nor do I fear, being thus freed from the powers of darkness, to be rejected by the Father of lights, since I am justified freely by the blood of his Son. He who pitied the sinner, will not condemn the just. I call myself just, but it is through His righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness ‡, and he is made of God for us righteousness §. Thus is man made righteous by the blood of the Redeemer; though Abelard, this man of perdition, thinks the only use of his coming was, to deliver to us good rules of life, and to give us an example of patience and charity. Is this then the whole of the great mystery of godliness, this which any uncircumcised and unclean person may easily penetrate? What is there in this beyond the common light of nature? But it is not so: for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ||: Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent ¶; and, if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost **.—He asks, had the devil dominion over

* Coloss. ii. 15. † Rom. v. 16. ‡ Rom. x. 4. § 1 Cor. i. 30.
 || 2 Cor. ii. 14. ¶ Mat. xi. 25. ** 2 Cor. iv. 3.

Abraham and the other elect? No; but he would have had, if they had not been freed by faith in him that was to come. As it is written, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness; and Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it, and was glad. It was the blood of Christ, which like dew distilled on Lazarus, and preserved him from the flames of hell through faith in him who was to suffer. We must believe of all the elect of that time, that they were born as we are, under the powers of darkness, but were thence delivered before they died; and that only by the blood of Christ.

“Abelard asks, why so tedious and painful a mode of deliverance, since Christ could have effected it by a mere volition? Who affirms that the Almighty was limited to this mode? But the efficacy of this method, which he preferred to all other possible ones, is surely demonstrable from that very preference: and, perhaps, in this its excellence may appear, that the grievous sufferings of our Redeemer afford us an admonition of the strongest and most impressive nature, concerning our own fallen and miserable condition. But no man knows, nor can know to the full, what precious benefits, what wisdom, what propriety, what glory the unsearchable depth of this mystery contains in itself.—But, though we may not search out the mystery of the divine will, we may feel the effect of its execution, and reap the fruit of its goodness: and what we may know, we ought not to conceal.—When we were yet sinners, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. Where reconciliation is, there is remission of sins. In what then lies remission of sins? This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you, for the remission of sins*.—Why my blood, say you, what he might have done by a bare word? Ask God himself.—I may know that it is so: why it is so, I may not. Shall the potter say to him that formed him, why hast thou made me thus?

“Strange, says he, that God should be reconciled to men by the death of his Son, which ought to have incensed him the more against them. As if in one and the same transaction the iniquity of wicked men might not displease, and the piety of the sufferer please God. What,

* Luke xxii. 20.

says he, can expiate the guilt of the murder of Christ, if nothing less than that murder could expiate the sin of Adam? We answer briefly, that very blood which they shed, and the intercession of him, whom they slew.—Not simply the death but the voluntary obedience unto death, of the Redeemer, was well pleasing to God; of the Redeemer I say, who by that death destroyed death, wrought salvation, retrieved innocence, triumphed over principalities and powers, reconciled all things in heaven and in earth, and restored all things. And because this precious death, which was to be spontaneously undergone, could not take place but through the sin of men, he, not delighted indeed with their wickedness, but taking occasion from it to execute the purposes of his own benevolence, by death condemned death. This blood was able to expiate the guilt which shed it, and therefore left no doubt of its expiating the first original sin. In answer to his tragical complaints of the cruelty of this dispensation, we say, God did not thirst for blood, but for salvation, which was to be effected by blood. Salvation we say, and not, as he writes, the mere display of love, and the exhibition of useful instruction and a powerful example. For what avails instruction without recovery? How useless the finest lessons, unless the body of sin be destroyed in us! At this rate the whole harm of Adam's sin lies in the exhibition of an evil example, since the medicine must be adapted to the quality of the wound. For, if we be Christians and not Pelagians, we must confess the sin of Adam to be derived to us, and by sin death; and that righteousness is restored to us by Christ, not by instruction, but by regeneration; and by righteousness life; that, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, righteousness came upon all men to justification of life*. If, as he says, the design of the incarnation was illumination, and a powerful incentive to love, we may own these things came from Christ; but, from whom came redemption and deliverance?

“As far as in him lies, he, who attributes the glory of redemption not to the cross of Christ, but to our profi-

* Rom. v. 18.

ciency in holy conversation, renders void and of none effect the mystery of the divine dispensation. But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom is our salvation, life, and resurrection.

“ I see, indeed, three capital objects in this work of our salvation, the form of humility by which the Son of God made himself of no reputation, the measure of love, which he extended even to the death of the Cross, and the mystery of redemption, in which he suffered death. The two former, exclusive of the latter, are as if you painted on a vacuum. Great and necessary indeed was the example of humility ; great, and worthy of all acceptance, was the example of his charity ; but remove redemption, and these have no ground to stand upon. I would follow the humble Jesus, I desire to embrace with the arms of love him who loved me, and gave himself for me ; but—I must EAT the Paschal Lamb. Unless I eat his flesh and drink his blood, I have no life in me. It is one thing to follow Jesus, another to embrace, another to feed upon him. To follow, is wholesome counsel ; to embrace, is solemn joy ; to feed upon him, is a happy life. For his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. The bread of God is he that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world *. What room is there for counsel or for joy, without life ? they are mere pictures and shadows, without a solid ground and substance. Therefore, neither examples of humility, nor displays of charity, are any thing without redemption.”

If the reader has attentively considered the arguments of Abelard, and the answer of Bernard, he has seen what weight ought to be laid on a fashionable sentiment of this day, namely, that in consequence of the improvements in reasoning and philosophy, a person is now capable of expounding the Scriptures much better than the ancients could do. If the observation be supposed to be applicable to the essential doctrines of salvation, I ask, How does this appear to be the case ? In subjects of human art and science, indeed, new discoveries may be

* John vi.

expected, but with what pertinency can the remark be applied to divinity? The whole system of divine truth is not more perfectly revealed now than it was seventeen hundred years ago. The Scriptures are the same; common sense is the same; the influence of the Holy Spirit is the same; and human wants are the same: and if men search and pray in humility and seriousness; if they cry after knowledge, and lift up their voice for understanding; if they seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures, what is there to hinder them from understanding the fear of the Lord, and finding the knowledge of God, in one age as well as in another*? Is not God said to be willing to show, in the ages to come, the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus†? And will any man say, that, in some particular periods, he is not willing to unfold these inestimable riches? It is not to be denied, but that by skill in learned languages, by study, and by general cultivation of the human mind, much light may be thrown on several doubtful passages of holy writ: their connexion and meaning may be rendered clearer, and so far improvements may be made in the interpretation of Scripture; but when this is admitted, we must still maintain that no new discoveries are to be expected in regard to the essential and fundamental truths of divine wisdom and holiness, and to these truths this whole remark is exclusively confined. These, wherever the Bible can be had in an intelligible language, seem to lie open to the view of all humble and serious inquirers in every age. What can modern Socinianism say more than Abelard said? And does not Bernard answer it in the same manner as evangelical divines do now? Even in the darkness of the twelfth century we have seen the light as clear and full in the main, as it can be at this day. Old errors may be revived and dressed up anew, but they are the same errors still. Even the praise of original genius will be denied to the modern heretic, by him, who carefully investigates antiquity. The whole circle of human sciences, however they be cultivated and improved in our days, can add nothing to the stock of spiritual under-

* Prov. ii.

† Eph. ii. 7.

standing. In every age God has not been wanting to his Church; and divine truth has ever appeared the same, and has brought forth the same holy fruits in those, who fear God, and believe the Gospel of his Son.

I shall not now need to give an abstract of the other letters, which Bernard wrote on this occasion. In them all he sees the true ground of Abelard's errors. While this heretic undertook to comprehend all that God is, by mere human reason, while nothing seemed to escape his penetration either in heaven above or in the depth beneath, he was totally ignorant of himself*. He was ignorant of nothing, but of himself†. Such is the language of Bernard, concerning him, while he cautions the pope and other dignitaries of the Roman Church against the seductions of heresy, and informs them how much Abelard presumed on the expectation of finding patrons at Rome, where his books had been dispersed‡.

The influence of Bernard's labours in this cause on the minds of the Christian world was very great, and decisively defeated the designs of the enemy. Gaufredus, one of the writers of Bernard's life, observes, "Blessed be God, who gave to us a better master, by whom he confuted the ignorance of the former, and quashed his arrogance, by whom Christ exhibited to us three special objects in his sufferings,—an example of virtue, an incentive of love, and a sacrifice of redemption§."

Roused by the exhortations of Bernard, the pope pronounced a definitive sentence against Abelard, ordered his works to be burned, and the heretic to be confined in some monastery, at the discretion of the leaders of the council which had condemned his doctrine. We have, however, better authority than that of the pope for pronouncing his sentiments heretical. And though the decisions of the pope deserve no attention from Christians, it was matter of sincere pleasure to all, who loved the souls of men, that Abelard was stripped of the power of doing mischief. As for the rest, he was treated with as great lenity as the nature

Abelard
condemned
by a defini-
tive sentence
of the pope.

* Vol. I. p. 184, 185.

† 186.

‡ 312.

§ Vol. II. 1074.

of ecclesiastical government at that time, which was certainly absurd and arbitrary in many respects, would admit. He was permitted to end his days in the monastery of Cluni, over which Peter the venerable presided, who treated him with much compassion and friendship. An interview was also promoted by the good-natured offices of Peter, and of another abbot, between the two champions, the particulars of which are not known. Only it appears, that Bernard declared himself satisfied with Abelard's orthodoxy. I suppose the latter would, in conversation, retract, or soften, or explain his thoughts in the same manner as he did in an apology, which he published at this time. But the reader remembers, that this was not the first time of his submitting himself to the judgment of the Church. Whether he was sincere or not, it belongs not to man to determine. The charity of Bernard, however, is incontestable, because he dropped the accusation, as soon as Abelard had ceased to vent heretical sentiments. Not personal malice, but Christian zeal seems to have influenced the abbot of Clairval in this whole transaction.

If it be asked, what benefit resulted from the scene, which we have reviewed? it is answered, either Abelard's retractation was sincere or not. If the former, the advantage was great to the heretic himself; if the latter, he doubtless added hypocrisy to his other crimes, though he was prevented from making himself accessory to the ruin of others. But the guilt of hypocrisy was properly and solely his own. If his opponents contracted any guilt on the account, it would be unlawful to oppose error at all, for fear of possible consequences. To this I add, that the benefit resulting to the whole Church for ages, is unquestionably evident; a consideration worthy the attention of those, who, in their charity for single heretics, seem to forget the mercy and charity due to the souls of thousands. Abelard, however, continued after these events in quiet obscurity, till his death, which took place in the year 1142, or 1143.

Death of
Abelard,
A.D. 1142,
or 1143.

Eloisa survived this extraordinary man many years. Their correspondence still remains, and I have examined

it with a view to discover, whether there be any evidences of genuine conversion in the unhappy couple. That they were sorry for their past follies is certain; that the latter part of their lives was outwardly decent and regular is no less evident; but of real repentance, genuine faith in Christ, and the true love of God, I cannot discern any satisfactory proofs.

I have now enabled the reader, by an orderly statement of facts, to decide for himself what candour and justice there is in the declaration of a learned
 Criticism of Mosheim. historian, that “Bernard misunderstood some of the opinions of Abelard, and wilfully perverted others. For,” continues he, “the zeal of this good abbot too rarely permitted him to consult, in his decisions, the dictates of impartial equity; and hence it was, that he almost always applauded beyond measure, and censured without mercy*.” Wilful perversions, and by a good man too! what inconsistency of language! Or is Bernard called a good man ironically? Or did this writer feel a sympathy with one of these great men, and an antipathy to the other? Certainly, whoever, like Bernard, defends the real truth as it is in Jesus, with the simplicity of a Christian, even though he preserve modesty, caution, and charity, must expect no mercy from the criticisms of men more zealous for the honour of what they improperly call rational religion, than for that of Jesus Christ. The world will LOVE ITS OWN: “the carnal mind is enmity against God;” and he, who in charity supports evangelical truth, and, under God, is made wise to win souls to real humility and holiness, should commit himself to him that judgeth righteously, and patiently wait his decision.

If Mosheim do not altogether deserve the censure implied in these observations, undoubtedly he is not to be acquitted of uncharitableness, temerity, and self-sufficiency.

* Mosheim, p. 601. Vol. I. Quarto.

CHAP. III.

CONTROVERSIES OF BERNARD WITH SEVERAL OTHER REAL OR
SUPPOSED HERETICS. SOME ACCOUNT OF THE CATHARI.

So great was the esteem of Bernard throughout the Western Churches, that no characters of eminence in the religious world arose, but he was looked up to as a judge to decide concerning their merits. It happened that he had not always the same means of accurate information, as in the case of Abelard; and hence there is reason to believe, that he treats as heretics some persons, who were "the excellent of the earth." I shall throw together into this chapter the best information, which I can collect, concerning these matters. At any rate we shall find some light concerning the real Church of Christ.

Gillebert de la Porree, bishop of Poitiers, possessed of a subtile genius, and indulging a taste like that of Abelard, undertook to explain the mystery of the Trinity, by some curious distinctions and refinements. Offence was, however, given by his publications, and the zeal and eloquence of Bernard were employed in confuting him by public disputation. I shall not attempt to explain this controversy. It seems to have originated from the metaphysical spirit of Gillebert, whose chief fault appears to have been, that he was not content with plain truth, and with stopping there in his inquiries, where the Scripture does. The Trinity in unity, received in the simplicity of Scripture, is one of the clearest, as well as one of the most decisively scriptural doctrines in the world; and so it has always appeared to those who believe what is revealed, and who are content to be ignorant of the MANNER how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are three in one. But, though there seems no positive evidence of the heresy of Gillebert, the council of Rheims condemned some of his propositions, which were of a dangerous nature. Gillebert recanted them: Bernard candidly expressed his belief of the sincerity of the recantation; and the bishop of Poitiers was allowed to return to his bishopric*.

* Bern. Vol. II. p. 1138.—Du Pin's 12th Cent. Chap. VIII.

I have examined the sentiments of Gillebert, and cannot, I own, form any determinate conception of their nature. He wandered in the misty region of abstruse metaphysics, and seems both to have lost himself, and to have been unintelligible to his readers. Bernard endeavoured to stop the mystic inquirer in his career; and this was no unprofitable employment; but again Mosheim is displeased with the conduct of the abbot, and seems to intimate, that he himself understood the opinions of Gillebert, and that Bernard did not, when he says "these refined notions were far above the comprehension of good St. Bernard, who was by no means accustomed to such profound disquisitions, to such intricate researches*." Does Mosheim really mean what he says, or is the epithet good, synonymous with weak and ignorant? Bernard was, however, with the critic's leave, a man of sound understanding and of true wisdom; and if it were worth while, I could easily furnish the reader with such specimens of Gillebert's subtilties, as would fully justify the account given of him at the beginning of this chapter.

If to oppose the popedom with vigour and fortitude be in itself a certain criterion of a real Christian, Arnold of Brescia may justly be ranked among the most eminent saints. But the spirit and views of an innovator should be known, that we may determine, whether he deserve the character of a reformer. In Arnold, the spirit of an old Roman republican was united with the theological sentiments of a Socinian. He was the disciple of Abelard, and was in action as daring as that heretic had been in speculation. Bernard vehemently opposed his designs; and while he allowed his morals to be decent and regular, he guarded the Christian world against his ambition and secular artifices. The conduct of Arnold demonstrated, that Bernard penetrated into his real character. For this disciple of Abelard, having gained over at Rome a large party to his views, by his address and dexterity stirred up a sedition against the pontiff; during the violence of which, private houses were burned; the property of the

* Quarto, Vol. II. p. 602. As Mosheim's work, translated by Maclaine, is far better known than the original in England, I always quote the former, and would be understood, both here and elsewhere, to refer to that rather than to the latter.

clergy and nobles was plundered; the pope was driven from Rome; and, in general, the civil government was disordered and convulsed. Flushed with success, Arnold planned a scheme for the restoration of the forms of the old republic: but Providence favoured not his designs. In the end he was seized and burned, and his ashes were thrown into the Tiber. His case demonstrates, that to oppose what is established, however great be the abuses or faults of an establishment, is an uncertain criterion of character. What is it, which men really mean to substitute in the room of that government which is established? This is a question to which every man, who fears God, should seriously attend, before he suffer himself, by countenancing innovations, to introduce anarchy and confusion. Here Arnold of Brescia failed entirely*.

Tanchelin in Flanders, and Peter de Bruys, with his disciple Henry, in France, were also famous innovators in this century. The first appears to have been altogether so worthless and extravagant a person, that I shall not detain the reader a moment concerning his character or his actions. Nor can I give such an account of the others as is very satisfactory to my own mind. They were both treated as heretics: they both made many converts to their sentiments; and were condemned by the then reigning powers. Peter was burnt to ashes, and Henry was put under a confinement, in which he seems to have ended his days. Peter of Cluni, from whose writings we have the most copious account of de Bruys, and doubtless a man of a mild and moderate temper, charges him with atrocious excesses, and represents him as supporting his tenets by violence and sedition†. The testimony against the moral character of Henry is still more peremptory. For Bernard charges him with scandalous impurities of practice, and refers to such proofs and circumstances, as might have led to a detection of the charges, if he had indeed been innocent. And it was very much by the authority of Bernard, that the credit and party of Henry were sunk in the Christian world‡.

* Bern. p. 187, &c. Vol. I. Berington's Abelard, p. 301, &c.

† Du Pin's Heretics, 12th Cent. Berington's Abelard.

‡ Vol. I. p. 238. Vol. II. 1139.

These men, however, bore a striking testimony against the predominant corruptions of the Church. The superstitious rites with which the primitive custom of infant-baptism was now disgraced, naturally gave a strong plausibility to their arguments in favour of adult-baptism exclusively. They protested also against the extravagant sumptuousness of churches, the adoration of relics and images, and against masses, prayers for the dead, and transubstantiation. It is not worth while to discriminate with minute accuracy, what were the tenets of Peter, and what were those of Henry. With no great difference from one another, they descanted on the topics just mentioned ; they loudly inveighed against the papal and clerical abominations, under which Europe groaned at that time, and provoked a storm of vengeance, which proved their ruin. If we may judge from the accounts of their lives,—and they are very scanty and confused,—these men seem to have been rather bad citizens than heretics. The darkest circumstance relating to their character is, that they seem not to have been so clear and explicit in describing what they approved, as what they condemned. Satire and invective are plants of rapid and easy growth in the malignant soil of human nature. Men of the greatest licentiousness, both in sentiments and practice, can discover and display, with sufficient ability, the evils of popery. It belongs only to souls truly humbled, and well-informed in scriptural principles, to erect in its room the edifice of real evangelical truth and holiness ; and I wish I could show the reader that Peter and Henry performed this in any degree.

But though, among the supposed heretics of this century, we have failed in attempting to discover any particular leaders, who carry the unquestionable marks of real Christians, yet that there must have been some who were really such, is evident, from the consideration, that there certainly were opposers of the Church of Rome at this time, who deserve the name of PROTESTANTS*. The writer, to whom I have already been indebted for some evidence of this nature, particularly in the account of Claudius of Turin, has, with singular learning and in-

* Allix on the ancient Churches of Piedmont, p. 139—183.

dust, illustrated this part of ecclesiastical history, and seems to have consulted the very best monuments and records. It would be tedious to follow him through the mazes of a scene beyond expression obscure and perplexed. Nor can I depend on the attempts which he has made to class and distinguish his Protestant sects. The accusation of Manicheism was commonly brought against them all; nor will I venture to say, that every Christian sentiment or practice which he describes belongs to any one particular body of people. Those, who have conversed with different denominations of Christian professors, know how difficult it is to explain the various ramifications of parties, which, nevertheless, all seem to spring from one root: they are aware, also, how frequently it happens, that those, who are only superficially acquainted with the sectaries, and have noticed some external agreement, will hastily suppose persons to belong to the same class, when, in reality, they are quite opposite in spirit; and lastly, they have observed, that a disagreement in externals by no means, in all cases, implies an opposition of sentiments. Christian professors may differ in these smaller matters, and may even suspect the soundness of one another's principles, merely for want of mutual intercourse, when, in substance and in all essentials, they are the same people. Elaborate attempts to explain the several peculiarities and discriminations, for want of proper evidence, have often darkened this subject, instead of elucidating it. The worst consequence of such attempts is, that by the mixture of good and evil, which runs through such accounts, where the leading vestiges of Christianity are all along kept out of view, the reader can scarcely discern any true Church of Christ to have existed at all. How shall we conduct ourselves through this labyrinth? by laying down from the best authorities, the real marks of godliness, which existed among the various sects of professing Christians. If this can be done, the reader will find that the presence of God has been among them, however difficult it be to define the limits of the Church of Christ by human artificial distinctions. This I shall attempt to

do in the case before us, omitting those things which are foreign to the design of this history.

Evervinus of Steinfeld, in the diocese of Cologne, wrote to Bernard, a little before the year 1140, a letter, preserved by Mabillon, concerning certain heretics in his neighbourhood*. He was perplexed in his mind concerning them, and wrote for a resolution of his doubts to the renowned abbot, whose word was law at that time in Christendom. Some extracts of this letter are as follows : “ There have been lately some heretics discovered among us near Cologne, though several of them have, with satisfaction, returned again to the Church. One of their bishops and his companions openly opposed us in the assembly of the clergy and laity, in the presence of the archbishop of Cologne, and of many of the nobility, defending their heresies by the words of Christ and the Apostles. Finding that they made no impression, they desired that a day might be appointed for them, on which they might bring their teachers to a conference, promising to return to the Church, provided they found their masters unable to answer the arguments of their opponents, but that otherwise they would rather die, than depart from their judgment. Upon this declaration, having been admonished to repent for three days, they were seized by the people in the excess of zeal, and burnt to death ; and what is very amazing, they came to the stake, and bare the pain, not only with patience, but even with joy. Were I with you, Father, I should be glad to ask you, how these members of Satan could persist in their heresy with such courage and constancy, as is scarcely to be found in the most religious believers of Christianity ?”

It cannot be denied, that the reigning corruptions both of faith and practice, from the times of Gregory the second and third, distinguished by real idolatry, had rendered the pretence of uniformity, considered as a mark of the Church, entirely unsound. In these circumstances, then, the appeal to a fair and open course of Scriptural argument, was not unreasonable : the refusal of this

* Allix, Churches of Piedmont, p. 140.

A report of
certain he-
retics by
Evervinus,
A.D. 1140.

appeal, and the requisition of an unqualified submission made to the supposed heretics, was unchristian : and, if neither in the general course of their lives, nor in their behaviour on this occasion, there was any thing arrogant, deceitful, or turbulent ;—and Evervinus charges them with nothing of the kind ;—the patience and joy of their martyrdom may seem to have arisen from the consideration, that God was with them. But Evervinus goes on : “ their heresy is this : they say, that the Church is only among themselves, because they alone of all men follow the steps of Christ, and imitate the Apostles, not seeking secular gains, possessing no property, following the pattern of Christ, who was himself perfectly poor, and did not allow his disciples to possess any thing.” Doubtless they carried this point too far * : for, rich Christians are charged to be rich in good works, willing to distribute, apt to communicate † : these are precepts, which suppose that the possession of opulent property is not incompatible with the character of a true Christian. The error is, perhaps, natural enough to those real good men whose habits and prejudices are chiefly of the vulgar sort ; and I would hence infer, that these supposed heretics were mostly of the lower class of people. God seems to have had a people among them, who detested the Romish abominations, and who served him in the Gospel of his Son. They appear, however, to have had no learned persons among them capable of doing justice to their characters. We must take these from the accounts of enemies. Evervinus proceeds : “ Ye, say they to us, join house to house, and field to field, seeking the things of this world ; so that even those, who are looked on as most perfect among you, namely, those of the monastic orders, though they have no private property, but have a community of possessions, do yet possess these things. Their own condition in the world they represent in such terms as these ; we the poor of Christ, who have no certain abode, fleeing from one city to another, like sheep in the midst of wolves, do endure persecution with the Apostles and Martyrs ; though our lives are strict, abstemious, laborious, devout, and holy,

* It is probable, however, that Evervinus misrepresented them, as will appear afterwards.

† 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18.

and though we seek only what is necessary for the support of the body, and live as men who are not of the world. But ye, lovers of the world, have peace with the world, because ye are of it. False apostles, who adulterate the word of Christ, seeking their own*, have misled you and your ancestors; whereas, we and our fathers, being born and bred up in the apostolical religion, have continued in the grace of Christ, and shall continue so to the end of the world. By their fruits ye shall know them, saith Christ; and our fruits are the footsteps of Christ. The Apostolical dignity, say they, is corrupted, by engaging itself in secular affairs, while it sits in the chair of Peter.—They do not believe infant-baptism to be a duty, alleging that passage of the Gospel, whosoever shall believe and be baptized, shall be saved †.—They put no confidence in the intercession of Saints; and all things observed in the Church, which have not been established by Christ himself or his Apostles, they call superstitions. They do not admit of any purgatory after death; but affirm, that as soon as the souls depart out of the bodies, they enter into rest or punishment, proving their assertion from that passage of Solomon, which way soever the tree falls, whether to the south or to the north, there it lies; whence they make void all the prayers and oblations of believers for the deceased.—Those of them who have returned to our Church, told us, that great numbers of their persuasion were scattered almost every where, and that among them were many of our clergy and monks.”

All this seems to be at least as fair an account of true Christians, as might be expected from the mouths of enemies. Evervinus can be considered in no other light than that of an enemy, for he calls these men by the harsh name of monsters;—and it deserves to be noticed, that from his confession it plainly appears, there were societies of Christians, in the twelfth century, who dis-

* Philipp. ii. 21.

† The propriety of infant-baptism has been once for all vindicated, in Vol. I. of this history. I shall only add here, that these sectaries are charged with Manicheism, and of course with the total rejection of water-baptism. It was no unusual thing to stigmatize new sects with the odious name of Manichees, though I know no evidence that there were any real remains of that ancient sect in the twelfth century.

owned the pope and all the fashionable superstitions. These societies were poor and illiterate indeed, hardly distinguishable from a number of fantastic and seditious sects, headed by the very exceptionable characters we have reviewed; and they were not denominated from any one leader of eminence. They do not seem to have understood the necessity of the existence of property, and therefore, with vulgar ignorance, they held, as it was reported, a tenet inconsistent with the good order of society*; yet, with all these defects, they probably possessed the spirit of real godliness; and though imperfect in light, and in some points of practice, upheld the real truth of God, during the general profligacy and corruption.

If Bernard had been habitually conversant among them, I can conceive that much good might have arisen to both parties. From him they might have learned a more copious and perspicuous view of the doctrines of divine grace, and improved in the knowledge of the fundamental truths of the Scripture. His pious zeal and charity and humility might have instructed their minds, and disposed them to give up their absurd ideas concerning property and social rights: and he, from an intercourse with them, might have learned that the pope was indeed the Antichrist of Scripture, and so have been emancipated from a variety of superstitions, in which he was involved all his days. But mutual ignorance and prejudice prevented both him and them from even intimately knowing each other. In his 65th and 66th sermons on the Canticles†, he attacks these sectaries; he condemns their scrupulous refusal to‡ swear at all, which, according to him, was also one of their peculiarities. He upbraids them with the observance of secrecy in their religious rites, not considering the necessity which persecution laid upon them. He finds fault with a practice among them, of dwelling with women in the same house, without being married to them; though it must be owned, he expresses himself as one who knew

* We shall afterwards see abundant occasion to doubt the truth even of this charge.

† P. 1493, Vol. I.

‡ The truth of this charge also, as will appear afterwards, is much to be doubted.

very little of the manners of the sect. From the strength of prejudice, and from the numberless rumours propagated against them, he suspects them of hypocrisy ; yet his testimony in favour of their general conduct seems to overbalance all his invectives. “ If,” says he, “ you ask them of their faith, nothing can be more Christian : if you observe their conversation, nothing can be more blameless ; and what they speak they prove by deeds. You may see a man, for the testimony of his faith, frequent the Church, honour the elders, offer his gift, make his confession, receive the sacrament. What more like a Christian ? As to life and manners, he circumvents no man, overreaches no man, and does violence to no man. He fasts much, he eats not the bread of idleness, he works with his hands for his support.—The whole body, indeed, are rustic, and illiterate ; and all whom I have known of this sect are very ignorant.”

He who confesses a set of men to have been so apparently sound and upright in faith and practice, should not have treated them with contempt, because they were poor and vulgar. Their ignorance and rustic habits should rather serve as some apology for their errors concerning the nature of baptism and of human society. And the proofs of their hypocrisy ought to be very strong indeed, which can overturn such evidences of piety and integrity as Bernard himself has admitted concerning them. It seems also from his account, that they were not Separatists, in the modern sense of the word. Though no doubt they had private religious assemblies, they attended the worship of the general Church, and joined with other Christians in every thing which they deemed to be laudable. It would be tedious to examine minutely the charges and arguments of Bernard. He attacks some Manichean errors with great justice, supposing the men, against whom he writes, to be Manichees. He argues in defence of infant-baptism, and,—lamentable blindness in so holy a person !—he vindicates the doctrine of purgatory, and other Roman superstitions. He owns, that these men died with courage in defence of their doctrine, and blames those who, in an illegal and irregular manner, had destroyed some of them. Some notions, concerning

marriage, which they were supposed to hold, he justly rebukes, though, from the excessive prejudice of their adversaries, it is very difficult to know how to affix charges of real guilt upon them.

Let not the lover of real Christianity be distressed at these things. The power of prejudice is great; and it is hard to say how many wrong notions both Bernard and these supposed heretics might maintain, through the circumstances of the times, and yet both serve the same God in the Gospel of his Son. That HE did so is abundantly evident; that many of THEM did so, their lives and their sufferings evince. It will be one of the felicities of heaven, that Saints shall no longer misunderstand one another. But there want not additional evidences, that this people of Cologne were true PROTESTANTS. Egbert, a monk, and afterwards abbot of Schönauge, tells us*, that he had often disputed with these heretics, and says, "These are they who are commonly called Cathari." From his authority I shall venture to distinguish them by this name. The term corresponds to the more modern appellation of PURITANS, and most probably was affixed to them by their contemporaries, in derision and contempt. Egbert adds, that they were divided into several sects, and maintained their sentiments by the authority of Scripture. See by the confession of an enemy their veneration for the divine word, and their constant use of it, in an age when the authority of Scripture was weakened, and its light exceedingly obscured, by a variety of traditions and superstitions. "They are armed," says the same Egbert, "with all those passages of Holy Scripture, which in any degree seem to favour their views; with these they know how to defend themselves, and to oppose the Catholic truth, though they mistake entirely the true sense of Scripture, which cannot be discovered without great judgment."—"They are increased to great multitudes throughout all countries—their words eat like a canker. In Germany we call them Cathari; in Flanders they call them Piphles; in French Tisserands, because many of them are of that occupation†." Bernard himself also,

* Allix, p. 149.

† That is, weavers; see Du Pin, Cent. XII. p. 88.

a Frenchman, speaks of both sexes of them as weavers; and it became not a man of his piety to speak degradingly of the humble labours of peaceful industry. But such were the times! monastic sloth appeared then more holy than useful mechanical occupations. We seem, however, by comparing together several fragments of information, to have acquired some distinct ideas of these Cathari: they were a plain, unassuming, harmless, and industrious race of Christians, condemning, by their doctrine and manners, the whole apparatus of the reigning idolatry and superstition, placing true religion in the faith and love of Christ, and retaining a supreme regard for the divine word. Neither in that, nor in any other age, since the propagation of the Gospel of Christ, have the fanciful theories of philosophers contributed to enlighten or improve mankind in religious matters. It is a strict attention to the revealed word, which, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, has alone secured the existence of a holy seed in the earth, who should serve God in righteousness; though they might frequently be destitute of learning and every secular advantage; as seems to have been the case with the Cathari. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

It appears also that their numbers were very considerable in this century; and that Cologne, Flanders, the south of France, Savoy, and Milan, were their principal places of residence.

"They declare," says Egbert, "that the true faith and worship of Christ is no where to be found but in their meetings, which they hold in cellars and weaving rooms. If ever they do accompany the people, with whom they dwell, to hear mass, or to receive the sacrament, they do it in dissimulation, that they may be thought to believe what they do not; for they maintain, that the priestly order has perished in the Roman Church, and is preserved only in their sect." He gives, however, and at too great a length to be here inserted, some noble testimonies of the soundness of their doctrine, in the rejection of purgatory, prayers for the dead, and the like.

I am obliged to collect, from thinly-scattered materials, the evidences of the true character of these Cathari; and

*Testimonies
in favour of
the Cathari.* much has, I think, already appeared in their favour, from the mouths of enemies. Egbert, we see, allows, in perfect agreement with Bernard, that they were not Separatists, in the modern sense of the word, and that they attended the public service and sacraments of the general Church. I suppose they knew how to make a practical distinction between what still remained divinely excellent in the Church, and what was idolatrous and corrupt. They seem to have conformed to the public worship, much in the same manner as the Apostles themselves did to the Jewish Church, while it existed, still preserving an union among themselves in worship, and in hearing sermons, so far as the iniquity of the times would permit. That which Egbert charges to their hypocrisy, I should think admits of a more liberal construction. It may appear to deserve the name of candour and even of charity. He, who agrees with you in practice, so far as you are right, ought to be respected for his conformity, notwithstanding that in things, which he deems wrong, he explicitly opposes you.—It were to be wished, that all serious Christians had acted in that manner, and had not been so hasty, as some of them have been, in forming a total separation from the general Church, then the happy influence of their views in religion might have spread more powerfully; nor is there any particular danger that they themselves would have received infection from the world, while they were estranged from it in practice and in manners. After all, circumstances may arise, when an entire separation from the whole body of nominal Christians may become necessary to the people of God. But this should never be attempted with precipitation. And the meekness and charity, which the Cathari exhibited in this point, seem highly laudable. He also, who has observed so much of the world, as to perceive that a deliberate system of hypocrisy usually prevails among a collection of idle vagrants, but seldom or never among men who subsist by patient industry, will be little moved by Egbert's charge of dissimulation.

The same Egbert confesses also, that they had many things mingled with their Master's doctrine, which are not to be found among the ancient Manichees. "They

are also," says he, "divided among themselves: what some of them say is denied by others." If the Cathari held some doctrines quite distinct from Manicheism, it should seem, that the whole charge of that ancient odious heresy, might be nothing more than a convenient term of reproach. Even Bernard, who appears to have been extremely ill informed concerning this people, remarks, that they had no particular father of their heresy;—an observation, which may imply more than he was willing to allow, namely, that they were not heretics, but Christians. As to the diversity of sentiments among themselves, what denomination of Christians ever existed, who, in some smaller matters, did not maintain several diversities?

The people continued in a state of extreme persecution, throughout this century. Galdinus, bishop of Milan, who had inveighed against them during the eight or nine years of his episcopacy*, died in the year 1173, by an illness contracted through the excess of his vehemence in preaching against them.

The Cathari persecuted throughout this century. Galdinus of Milan inveighed against them for 8 or 9 years till his death, A.D. 1173.

There is a piece, intitled "The Noble Lesson," written undoubtedly by one of the Cathari, which in the body of it says, eleven hundred years are already passed, since it was written thus; "for we are in the last time †." The writer, supposing that the world was drawing near to an end, exhorts his brethren to prayer, watching, and the renunciation of worldly goods. He speaks with energy of death and judgment; of the different issues of godliness and of wickedness; and, from a review of the Scripture history, connected with the experience of the

* Allix, p. 153.

† The manuscript of this composition was given to the public Library of the University of Cambridge, by Sir Samuel Morland in the year 1658. The people of whom the author speaks, are called Wallenses or Vaudes, from the vallies of Piedmont. They afterwards were called Waldenses, from Peter Waldo, of whom hereafter; and by that name they are known to this day. But by the date 1100 they were evidently a distinct people before his time, and, most likely, had existed, as such, for some generations. The seeds of the Cathari had, in all probability, been sown by Claudius of Turin, in the ninth century. The whole of the "Noble Lesson" is given us by Sir Samuel Morland, in his History of the Churches of Piedmont. Allix, 160. Morland's Hist.

times in which he lived, concludes, that there are but few that shall be saved.

The first principle of those, says he, who desire to serve God, is to honour God the Father, to implore the grace of his glorious Son, and the Holy Ghost, who enlightens us in the way of truth. This is the Trinity, full of all power, wisdom and goodness, to whom we ought to pray for strength to overcome the devil, the world, and the flesh, that we may preserve soul and body in love. To the love of God, he observes, the love of our neighbour should be joined, which comprehends the love even of our enemies. He speaks of the believer's hope of being received into glory. He explains the origin of all that evil which reigns in the world; and traces it up to the sin of Adam, which brought forth death; whence, says he, Christ hath redeemed us by his own death. He asserts the necessity of holiness in order to salvation. He explains the spirituality of the law of God, and describes the punishment of transgressors as the effect of divine justice and goodness. He illustrates the holiness of the divine character, in the economy of the Old Testament, and in the history of the Israelites, and delineates the purity and perfection of the Gospel-precepts. He relates the great historical facts of Christianity, and makes some just observations on the spirit of persecution. Very remarkable is the character which he gives of the Vaudes in his own time, contrasted with that of their enemies. Let the reader consider, whether we have not here the flock of Christ among wolves. "If a man," says he, "love those who desire to love God and Jesus Christ; if he will neither curse, nor swear, nor act deceitfully, nor live in lewdness and injustice, nor avenge himself of his enemies, they presently say, the man is a Vaude; he deserves to be punished: and iniquitous methods are then used to rob him of the fruits of his lawful industry. Such a one, however, consoles himself with the hope of eternal salvation." He represents their enemies as supposing themselves to be good men and true Christians; and exposes their folly in placing hopes on a death-bed repentance, the priestly absolution and masses.

He roundly condemns the whole system of Antichrist, which prevailed in his time, particularly the fatal doctrine of priestly absolution. He describes the true practical principles of Christian godliness, and declares that no other divine revelation is to be expected. He speaks with equal simplicity and strength of the last judgment, and of the everlasting punishments of the wicked ; “ from which,” says he, “ may God deliver us, if it be his blessed will, and give us to hear what he shall say to his elect, Come hither, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world, where ye shall have true pleasure, riches, and honour. May it please the Lord, who formed the world, that we may be of the number of his elect, to dwell in his court for ever. Praised be God. Amen.”

Such was the provision of divine Grace, to take out of a corrupt and idolatrous world of nominal Christians, a people formed for himself, who should show forth his praise, and who should provoke the rest of mankind by the light of true humility, and holiness : a people, singularly separate from their neighbours in spirit, manners, and discipline ; rude indeed, and illiterate, and not only discountenanced, but even condemned by the few real good men, who adhered altogether to the Romish Church, condemned, because continually misrepresented. I know not a more striking proof of that great truth of the divine Word, that, in the worst of times, the Church shall exist, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

CHAP. IV.

THE WRITINGS OF BERNARD REVIEWED.

IN this chapter I shall take notice of some of those parts of Bernard's writings which bear no relation to the controversies that have already engaged our attention.

His epistles come first under our consideration ; and, among these, the epistle directed to Bruno, elected arch-
Bernard's
epistles.
 bishop of Cologne, deserves the attention of pastors, and of every person who aspires to the most important of all functions.

“ You * ask of me, illustrious Bruno, whether you ought to acquiesce in the desires of those, who would promote you to the office of a bishop. What mortal can presume to decide this? Perhaps God calls you; who may dare to dissuade? Perhaps he does not; who may advise you to accept? Whether the calling be of God, or not, who can know, except the Spirit, who SEARCHES THE DEEP THINGS OF GOD, or he, to whom the Spirit may reveal it? Your humble, but awful confession, in your letter, renders it still more difficult to give advice; so grievously, and, as I believe, with truth, do you condemn the course of your past life. For, it cannot be denied, that such a life is unworthy of so sacred an office. But you fear on the other side, and I also have the same apprehensions, that it may be wrong not to improve the talent of knowledge committed to you, though your conscience do thus accuse you; only it may be observed, that you may faithfully employ that talent in some other method, less extensive indeed, but less hazardous. I own, I am struck with a serious dread: I speak freely to you, as to my own soul, what I really think, when I consider from what, and to what you are called; especially, as no time for repentance will intervene, through which the passage, however dangerous, might be made. And truly, the right order of things requires that a man should take care of his own soul, before he undertake the care of the souls of others. But what if God hasten his grace, and multiply his mercy toward you? Blessed indeed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. For who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? If God justify, who is he that condemns? The thief obtained salvation in this compendious method. One and the same day he confessed his sins, and was introduced into glory. The cross was to him a short passage from a region of death into the land of the living, and from the mire of corruption into the paradise of pleasure. This sudden remedy of godliness the happy sinful woman found, when on a sudden, where sin had abounded, grace began also to abound. Without a long course of penitential labour

* Ep. 8. Vol. I.

her many sins were forgiven.—It is one thing, however, to obtain a speedy remission; another, from a life of transgression, to be promoted to a bishopric. I can give no decisive opinion. But there is a duty, which we may perform for a friend without danger, and not without fruit; we may give him the suffrage of our prayers to God on his behalf. Leaving to God the secret of his own counsel, we may earnestly implore him to work in you and concerning you, what is becoming in his sight, and what is for your real good.”

Bruno having accepted the archbishopric, Bernard wrote thus to him*. “If all, who are called to the ministry, are of necessity called also to the heavenly kingdom, the archbishop of Cologne is safe indeed. But if Saul and Judas were elected, the one to a crown, the other to the priesthood by God himself; and the Scripture, which asserts this, cannot be broken, the archbishop of Cologne has reason to fear. If that sentence also be now as true as ever, namely, that God hath not chosen many noble, mighty, and wise, has not the archbishop of Cologne a threefold reason for solicitude? He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger†, is the voice of Wisdom itself. May I always deal with my friends in the language of salutary fear, not of fallacious adulation! To that he directs me, who says, Blessed is the man that feareth alway‡. From this he dissuades me, who says, O my people, those who lead thee cause thee to err§.”

In so serious a light appeared to Bernard the nature of the pastoral office. Do men in our times seek for eminent ecclesiastical situations with such impressions? Or, do secular gains frequently make a predominant part of their views? Perhaps there is not any one point of all practical religion, in which the ancients may more advantageously be compared with the moderns, than in the subject of the pastoral office, with regard to the ideas of its importance, and the qualifications which it requires!

In || another epistle to Guigo and his brethren, Carthusian monks, he describes the nature of true charity.

* Ep. 9.

† Luke xxii. 26.

‡ Prov. xxviii. 14.

§ Isaiah iii. 12.

|| Ep. 11. p. 28.

“There is one, who confesses to the Lord, because he is mighty ; there is another, who confesses to him, because he is good to the confessor ; and a third, who confesses to him, because he is simply good. The first is a slave, and fears for himself ; the second is mercenary, and desires his own interest merely ; the third is a Son, and behaves dutifully to a Father. He, who lives under the predominance of fear, or of desire of his own interest, is selfish ; but charity seeketh not her own. When a man prefers his own will to the eternal law of God, he perversely attempts to imitate the Creator, who is a law to himself. Alas ! In us such a spirit binds us downward to death and hell. He, who will not be sweetly ruled by the divine Will, is penally governed by himself, and he, who casts off the easy yoke and light burden of love, must suffer the intolerable load of self-will. My Lord God, may I breathe under the light burden of love, nor be restrained by slavish fear, nor allured by mercenary desire ; but may I be led by thy free Spirit, which may witness with my spirit, that I am thy child ! Love, indeed, is not without fear and desire ; but it sanctifies and regulates them both. But, because we are carnal, our love is carnal at first, which, if it be directed in right order, improving in its steps under the conduct of grace, will be consummated by the Spirit. In the first place, a man loves himself on his own account ; and, when he finds that he is not sufficient for his own happiness, he begins, by faith, to seek after God as necessary for him. He then loves God in the second degree, but for himself, not for the sake of God. But when, through the urgency of his wants, he has been brought to cultivate acquaintance with God, by degrees God himself begins to be known as he is, and of course to be loved : having tasted that the Lord is gracious, he passes to the third degree, to love God for what he is in himself. In this degree he stops, and I do not know that any man in this life attains a fourth, namely, that a man should love himself only on account of God. Let them assert this, who have found it : to me, I own, it seems impossible. But, it will take place, when the good and faithful servant shall be introduced into the joy of his Lord.”

Let this suffice for a small specimen of the metaphysical doctrine of charity, on which there has been so much controversy in different ages. The gradual progress of spirituality in religion seems to be justly described by Bernard ; and the plain dictates of common sense do evidently restrain the flights of his fancy. For, in truth, what is the amount of all the metaphysics, which good men have written, concerning the disinterested love of God, but this, that it ought to be sincere, not selfish ; and does not the common meaning of the word love teach us this ? If I may be said to love a friend for the sake of my own interest, it is, at least, a very improper mode of speech ; for, in strict propriety I love not him, but my own interest, or some gain which I conceive attainable through him. On the other hand, to talk of loving God, and relinquishing self-love, is unnatural and idle romance. On this subject then, which has tortured the minds of pious souls, it would be wise to stick to common sense, which knows no repugnance between the love of God and self-love, though the latter ought in all cases to be subordinate to the former : and this is the point, which Bernard seems to have understood and maintained. The greatest defect in the letter seems to be that, which was common to the age, namely, the want of a distinct and orderly description of the FAITH of the Gospel, which alone can work the love which he describes.

In another epistle*, he comments very justly on the judicial ignorance, which St. Paul describes as the punishment from God on those who knew God, and yet glorified him not as God †. “ But,” says he, “ God, who calleth things that be not, as though they were, in compassion to those, who are reduced, as it were, to nothing, hath, in the mean time, given us to relish by faith, and to seek by desire, that hidden manna, of which the Apostle says, Your life is hid with Christ in God ‡. I say in the mean time, because we cannot yet contemplate it according to its nature, nor fully embrace it by love. Hence we begin to be something of that new creature, which will at length become a perfect man, and attain the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ ; and

* 18. p. 35.

† Rom. ii.

‡ Coloss. iii. 3.

this will take place beyond doubt, when righteousness shall turn again to judgment, and the desire of the traveller shall be changed into the fulness of love. For, if faith and desire initiate us here when absent, understanding and love will consummate us when present. And, as faith leads to full knowledge, so desire leads to perfect love.—By these two arms of the soul, understanding and love, it comprehends the length and depth, and breadth and height; and Christ is all these things.” He goes on to expose the folly of seeking the praise of men, and the inconsistency of this spirit with the humility which becomes creatures so empty and vain.

Bernard, having been addressed in terms of great respect by Rainald, an abbot*, with his usual humility shows how averse he was to hear himself commended. “Indeed,” says he, “by extolling you depress me. But, that I may not sink under the pressure, I am consoled by the testimonies of divine truth: it is good for me that I have been in trouble, that I may learn thy statutes. Such is the marvellous efficacy of the Word of God, that while it humbles, it exalts us. This is indeed the kind and powerful operation of the Word, by whom all things were made; and thus, indeed, Christ’s yoke becomes easy, and his burden light. Light, indeed, is his burden. For what can be lighter than a load, which even carries every person, who bears it. A burden which unburdens the soul. In all nature I seek to find some resemblance to this, and I seem to discover a shadow of it in the wings of the bird, which are borne by the creature, and yet sustain and support its flights through the open firmament of heaven.”

To undertake pilgrimages to Jerusalem was the folly of the times. An abbot, John Carnotensis, was seized with this infatuation. Bernard, however, rebuked† his zeal, and endeavoured to convince him, that he ought not to abdicate the pastoral care which had been committed to him. The chief argument which supported John in this scheme, was drawn from the strength and vehemence of his desires. It is the usual plea of all, who really deserve the imputation of enthusiasm in reli-

* Ep. 72. p. 73.

† Ep. 82. p. 85.

gion; and it is sufficiently answered by Bernard. "You say, whence should I have so strong a desire, if it be not from God? With your good leave I will speak my sentiments. Stolen waters are sweet: and whoever is not ignorant of Satan's devices, will not hesitate to say, that this poisonous sweetness is infused into your thirsting heart by a minister of Satan, transformed into the appearance of an angel of light."

Bernard de Portis was a young man of the Carthusian order, and had been elected bishop of a church among the Lombards. Bernard, however, thinking him unfit for the situation, wrote to pope Innocent his sentiments; which had so great authority, as to prevent the young man's consecration. "It is, indeed, worthy of your dignity, to place a hidden light in a conspicuous situation. Let it be placed, if you please, on a candlestick, that it may be a burning and shining light, but only in a place where the violence of the wind may not prevail to extinguish it. Who knows not the restless and insolent spirit of the Lombards? What can a young man of a weak body, and accustomed to solitude, do amidst a barbarous, turbulent, and stormy people? His sanctity and their perverseness, his simplicity and their deceitfulness, will not agree together. Let him be reserved, if you please, for a more suitable situation, and for a people, whom he may so govern as to profit; and let us not lose, by a precipitate preferment, the fruit which may be reaped in due time*."

To Baldwin†, whom he had dismissed from his own monastery, and appointed abbot of the monastery of Reate, he writes with that vehemence of zeal and affection, which characterize his writings. "Doctrine, example, and prayer," he recommends as the three things which constitute a pastor. The last of the three he particularly recommends, as "that, which gives grace and efficacy to the labours of the preacher, whether these labours be of word or of deed."

See how the views of eternity mingle with the charitable affections of Bernard, and how familiar, and, at the same time, how animating were his prospects of the

* Ep. 155. p. 157.

† Ep. 201. p. 139.

last day! "I long for your presence," says he to a friend*, "but when? At least in the city of our God; if in truth we have here no continuing city, but seek one to come. There, there shall we see, and our heart shall rejoice. In the mean time, I shall be delighted with what I hear of you, hoping and expecting to see you face to face in the day of the Lord, that my joy may be full. In addition to the many good things which I constantly hear of you, let me beg your earnest prayers for us."

To † Eugenius his disciple, newly advanced to the pontificate, of whom we have already given some account, he writes with an ardour of sincere piety, which might induce one to forget, if any thing could, the vices of the popedom itself, as well as the pitiable superstitions, with which early habits had clouded the honest devotion of Bernard. "I waited," says he, "for some time, if perhaps, one of my sons might return, and assuage a father's grief, by saying, Joseph thy son liveth, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. No account arriving, I write, indeed, not from inclination, but from necessity, in compliance with the requests of friends, to whom I could not deny the little services, which the few days I yet may have to live may allow.—I envy not your dignity, because what was wanting to me, I trust I have in him, who not only comes after me, but also by me. For, dignified as you are, I have begotten you through the Gospel. What then is our hope, our joy, and crown of rejoicing? Are not you—in the presence of God?—It remains, that this change being made in your circumstances, the state of the Church may be changed also for the better. Claim nothing from her for yourself, except that you ought to lay down your life for her sake, if it be necessary. If Christ has sent you, you will reckon that you came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. A genuine successor of Paul will say with him, 'Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy‡.' Peter's successor will hear Peter's voice, 'not as lords

Bernard's
letter to the
Pope Eugene-
nius.

* Ep. 204. p. 195.

† Ep. 238. p. 234.

‡ 2 Cor. i. 13.

over God's heritage, but as ensamples to the flock*.'—All the Church of the Saints rejoices in the Lord, expecting from you, what it seemed to have had in none of your predecessors for many ages past. And should not I rejoice?—I own I do so, but with trembling. For, though I have laid aside the name of a father, I still have toward you a father's fear, anxiety, affection, and bowels. I consider your elevation, and I dread a fall; I consider the height of dignity, and I startle at the appearance of the abyss, which lieth beneath. You have attained a higher lot, but not a safer; a sublimer station, but not a securer. Remember, you are the successor of him, who said, 'silver and gold have I none†.' He then explains the particular business, on occasion of which he wrote at this time; and he desires him to act in such a manner, "that men may know that there is a prophet in Israel." "O that I might see before I die the Church of God, as in ancient times, when the Apostles let down their nets for a draught, not for silver and gold, but of souls! How do I wish you to inherit the voice of him, who said, thy money perish with thee‡! O voice of thunder! let all who wish ill to Zion be confounded at its sound! Many now say in pleasing expectation, the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Many say in their hearts, the flowers appear in our land. Take courage then, and be strong. But, in all your works, remember that you are a man, and let the fear of him, who restraineth the spirit of princes, be ever before your eyes. What a number of pontiffs before you have in a short time been removed! By constant meditation, amidst the blandishments of this fading glory, remember your latter end. Those, in whose seat you now sit, you will doubtless follow to the grave."

It cannot be denied, that the zeal, the sincerity, the purity of Christian doctrine, in all the essentials, at least, the charity, and the blameless manners of a reformer, appeared in Bernard. How happened it then, that numbers of illiterate weavers, as we have seen, detected the spirit of Antichrist in the popedom, and avoided its superstitions, while this abbot was imposed on by its

* 1 Pet. v. 3.

† Acts iii. 6.

‡ Acts viii. 20.

false glare of sanctity! I suppose, BECAUSE he was an abbot. The delusive splendour of fictitious holiness, so intimately connected with Antichrist, deceived one of the most upright of human kind. It was not given him to observe the unreasonableness of expecting the completion of his pious wishes in the Church, under the auspices of the See of corruption! If he had lived at large in the world, with no predilection for the court of Rome, and had been favoured with the same divine grace, and even with no higher degree of Christian virtue, than that which he then possessed, he might have been the head of the Cathari, whom he ignorantly censured! So much do circumstances contribute to the formation of characters in life, and so much reason have many, whose piety is far inferior to that of Bernard, to be thankful, that the lot is fallen to them in pleasant places.

From the Epistles let us pass on to other treatises. The five books concerning Consideration*, addressed to pope Eugenius, first offer themselves to our inspection. Bernard's treatises. As this pontiff was serious in his religious views, he had desired Bernard to send to him some salutary admonitions. The honest plainness of the abbot was at least equal to the unaffected humility of the pontiff. The first book is taken up with salutary cautions against that hardness of heart which an immensity of business is ever apt to produce. Bernard, who knew the toilsome life of a pope, and the snares with which he was daily encompassed, informs Eugenius that he was seriously afraid, lest, through a despair of managing a prodigious and unmeasurable course of business with a good conscience, he should be tempted to harden his heart, and deprive himself of all conscientious sensibility. "Begin not," says he, "to ask what is meant by hardness of heart. If you fear it not, you are already under its power. That is a hard heart which dreads not itself; for it is destitute of feeling. Why do you ask me what it is? ask Pharaoh. No man was ever saved from this curse but through that divine compassion, which, according to the prophet†, takes away the stone, and gives

* Vol. I. p. 414.

† Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

a heart of flesh." After a graphical description of the properties of a hard heart, he sums up the view with this sentence, "It neither fears God, nor regards man. See to what an end these accursed occupations will lead you, if you give yourself wholly to them, leaving nothing of yourself to yourself." He complains of the usual mode of the pontifical life, incessantly taken up with hearing and deciding causes ; whence no room is left for prayer, teaching and instructing the Church, and meditation on the Scriptures. "The voice of law, indeed, is perpetually sounding in the court, but it is the law of Justinian, not of the Lord." He advises him to pity himself, and not to throw his own soul out of the list of his objects of charity, lest, in serving others perpetually, he neglect his own spiritual condition. He directs him to suppress and cut short the endless frauds and cavils of law with which the courts abounded ; to decide in a summary manner on cases evidently plain ; to prefer substantial justice to the tedious parade of artificial formalities, and to animadvert with severity on the frauds of advocates and proctors, who made a traffic of iniquity. By this means he would fulfil the duties of his station with uprightness, and redeem time for privacy, contemplation and prayer.

In all this, I see the honest and pious soul of Bernard struggling against the corruption of the times. But the zeal was ineffectual. If Gregory I. lamented the load of his secular avocations, much more might Eugenius, who lived in an age still more corrupt, and upheld a pontificate still more secularized, and contaminated beyond all bounds by a system of iniquity. Even others, less exalted, and less incommoded with the shackles of the world than the pope of Rome, have found, both in civil and ecclesiastical life, the pressure of business too heavy for their minds. If they were conscientious, they were ready to sink under the difficulties ; if careless and indifferent, they grew hardened in iniquity, and lost all regard to piety and virtue. An inferior clerical station is infinitely more desirable in the eyes of a pastor, who means to serve God : and dignitaries in the Church may attend with profit to the lectures addressed to a pope.

In the beginning of the second book he makes a digression on the ill success of the expedition to the Holy Land, which had been undertaken through the exhortations of himself and of pope Eugenius. Here the eloquence of Bernard seems to be at a stand. He owns, however, with reverence, the unsearchable judgments of God; desires to take shame to himself, rather than that the glory of God should be sullied; and pronounces that man happy, who is not offended at an event so disastrous and unexpected. If the casuistry of Bernard, in this subject, appear feeble, and expose him to the derision of the profane, his humility, however, and his piety, seem unexceptionable. Recovered, as it were, from the sadness of his reflections on this humiliating occasion, he resumes the discourse on Contemplation, presses on the pontiff the duty of examining himself, and, toward the end, lays down rules of holy and charitable conversation, deserving the attention of every pastor.

In* the remaining part of this treatise, as well as in that which follows on the office of bishops, the zealous abbot describes and enforces the episcopal duties with his usual vehemence. He is particularly severe on the ambition of ecclesiastics in his time. He describes them as "heaping up benefices on benefices, and restless till they can attain a bishopric, and then an archbishopric. Nor, says he, does the aspirant stop there; he posts to Rome, and by supporting expensive friendships and lucrative connexions, he looks upward still to the summit of power†." How much more usefully might the spirit of Bernard have been employed in the instruction and regulation of the Church, could he have seen that the idolatrous system, to which his early monastic habits had attached him, admitted no cure; and that a distinct separation, to which men really wise and good are never hasty to advert, was yet, in present circumstances, justifiable and necessary.

The zeal of Bernard appears also very fervent in a

* It may be proper to mention here a remarkable testimony which Bernard gives to the upright and disinterested conduct of Eugenius, in his third Book de Consid. Two archbishops of Germany coming to this pope to plead a cause, offered him large presents, which he refused to receive, and obliged them to send back.

† P. 478.

small tract concerning Conversion, which contained the substance of a sermon preached at Paris before the clergy*. He insists largely and distinctly on the necessity of divine illumination, in order to genuine conversion. He exhorts his audience to self-examination; and, while he presses them to investigate their own breasts, he points out the salutary effects of a just conviction of sin! "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven†. Who is poorer in spirit than he who finds in himself no rest, no place where to lay his head? This is the divine economy, that he who feels the evil of sin, may learn to please God in newness of life; and he who hates his own habitation, a house of pollution and misery, may be invited to a house of glory, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. No wonder that he finds it hard to believe! Does misery make a man happy? But whoever thou art, in these circumstances, doubt not: not misery, but mercy gives bliss: but then the proper seat of mercy is misery. Thus distress of mind produces humility. Wholesome is that weakness which needs the hand of the physician, and blessed is that self-despair, through which God himself will raise and establish the heart. Even here the converted soul shall find the pleasures to which he is called a hundred-fold greater than those which he has relinquished, as well as, in the world to come, eternal life. Expect not from us a description of their nature. The Spirit alone reveals them: they are to be known only by experience. Not erudition, but unction teaches here; not knowledge, but inward consciousness comprehends them. That the memory of past sins should remain, and the stain of them be taken away, what power can effect this? The word alone, quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword. 'Thy sins are forgiven.' Let the Pharisee murmur, 'Who can forgive sins, but God alone?' He, who speaks thus to me, is God. His favour blots out guilt, so that sin shall remain on the memory, but no longer, as before, discolour it. Remove damnation, fear, confusion, as they are removed by full remission; and our past sins will not only cease to hurt

* P. 489.

† Matt. v. 3.

us, but will also work together for good, that we may devoutly thank Him who has forgiven them." With such energy of evangelical piety does Bernard preach the doctrines of grace and conversion to the clergy; an energy sullied, indeed, and obscured with that mysticism, which the solitude of monks always encouraged, yet substantially sound in its nature, and founded on the fundamental truths of the Gospel. Toward the close, he rebukes and exhorts the clergy as such, and bewails that intemperate ambition, which moved, and, may I not say, still moves, so many to precipitate themselves into divine functions from secular views? Let a sentence or two on this subject close our review of this sermon, and let those apply the rebuke to themselves whose practice seems to speak this language, namely, that the ministry is the only office in the world, in which presumption is a virtue, and modesty a vice. "Men run every where into sacred orders, and catch at an office revered by spirits above, without reverence, without consideration; in whom, perhaps, would appear the foulest abominations, if we were, according to Ezekiel's prophecy, to dig into the walls, and contemplate the horrible things which take place in the house of God *."

The sermons of our author on Solomon's Song, demonstrate that he was well acquainted with vital godliness. In the 36th he shows the various ways by which knowledge puffeth up †. "Some," Bernard's sermons. says he, "wish to know, merely for the sake of knowing; a mean curiosity. Some wish to know, that they themselves may be known; a mean vanity. Some seek for knowledge from lucrative motives; an avaricious baseness. Some desire to know, that they may edify their neighbour; this is charity. Others, that they may be edified; this is wisdom." On the whole, he owns that the cultivation of knowledge is good for instruction, but that the knowledge of our own weakness is more useful for salvation.

In the 74th sermon on the same divine book ‡, Bernard lays open something of his own experience on the operations of the Holy Spirit, and illustrates our Saviour's

* Ezek. viii. 8, 9, 10.

† P. 1404.

‡ P. 1529.

comparison of them to the wind; "thou knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth*." After a preamble, full of cautious modesty, and the most unaffected reverence, he says, "I was sensible, that he was present with me; I remembered it after his visits were over; sometimes I had a presentiment of his entrance, but I never could feel his entrance or his exit. Whence he came, and whither he departed; by what way he entered, or left me, I confess that I am even now ignorant: and no wonder, for his footsteps are not known†. You ask then, since all his ways are unsearchable, whence could I know that he was present? His presence was living and powerful: it awakened my slumbering soul: it moved, softened, and wounded my heart, which had been hard, stony, and distempered. It watered the dry places, illuminated the dark, opened those which were shut, inflamed the cold, made the crooked straight, and the rough ways plain; so that my soul blessed the Lord, and all that was within me praised his holy name. I had no evidence of the Lord's presence with me by any of the senses; only from the motion of my heart, I understood that he was with me; and, from the expulsion of vices, and the suppression of carnal affections, I perceived the strength of his power: from the discernment and conviction of the very intents of my heart, I admired the depth of his wisdom: from some little improvement of my temper and conduct, I experienced the goodness of his grace: from the renovation of my inward man, I perceived the comeliness of his beauty; and from the joint contemplation of all these things, I trembled at his majestic greatness. But because all these things on his departure became torpid and cold, just as if you withdrew fire from a boiling pot, I had a signal of his departure. My soul must be sad till he return, and my heart is again inflamed with his love; and let that be the evidence of his return. With such experience of the divine Word, if I use the language of the spouse, in recalling him, when he shall absent himself; while I live, her word, 'return‡,' shall be familiar to me. As often as he leaves me, so often shall he be recalled, that he may re-

* John iii. 8.

† Ps. lxxvii. 19.

‡ Canticles vi. 13.

store to me the joy of his salvation ; that is, that he may restore to me himself. Nothing else is pleasing, while he is absent, who alone is pleasure : and I pray that he may not come empty, but full of grace and truth, as he was wont to do." Then he goes on to explain the well-tempered mixture of gravity and delight, of fear and joy, of which all true converts are the subjects ; and he supports his description by that apposite quotation, " Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto him with trembling*."

It appeared not impertinent to the design of a history like this, to lay before the reader the inmost soul of a Saint of the twelfth century, confessing and describing the vicissitudes of spiritual consolations and declensions, which, with more or less varieties, in all ages of the Church, are known to real Christians. I know that much caution is necessary in speaking of them ; but if we speak according to the divine oracles, as Bernard seems to do, it should be a " small thing with us to be judged of man's judgment." The doctrine of regeneration itself, with all the mixed effects of spiritual health and sickness, in a fallen creature, is foolishness to the natural man†. If any man, however, have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his‡. It will be the wisdom of mere nominal Christians not to deride, but to seek for the Holy Spirit ; and while godly souls estimate his presence or his absence, by such marks and effects as Bernard describes, they will not only be free from enthusiasm, but will also make it their constant aim, not to grieve the Spirit of God, by which they are sealed to the day of redemption.

In|| the 78th sermon on the Canticles, he describes the Church as predestinated before all time, that it should be the spouse of Christ, and supports his observation from the words of St. Paul§. He speaks of the influence of the Holy Spirit, and of the conversion of sinners as the effect of this predestination. " Yet Emanuel," says he, " is the Personage, who was of us, and for us was clothed with our curse, and had the appearance, not the reality of our sin."

* Ps. ii. 11.

|| P. 1544.

† 1 Cor. ii. 14.

‡ Rom. viii. 9.

§ Eph. i. former part.

In a sermon on the beginning of the 91st Psalm, he answers a question which obviously arises to the mind of a serious person exercised in experimental godliness. Both the question and the answer deserve to be given in the author's own words. "What is the reason, that though we pray and supplicate incessantly, we cannot attain that abundance of grace which we desire? Think you that God is become avaricious, or indigent, impotent, or inexorable? Far, far from us be the thought: but he knows our frame. We must not, therefore, cease from petitioning, because, though he gives not to satiety, he gives what is needful for support; though he guards us against excessive heat, he cherishes us as a mother, with his warmth. As the mother sees the hawk approaching, and expands her wings that her young ones may enter and find a safe refuge, so his bosom being prepared, and, as it were, dilated for us, the ineffable kindness of our God is extended over us. This is a dispensation adapted to the infirmity of our condition; even grace itself must be moderated, lest we fall into an undue elevation of mind, or a precipitate indiscretion*."

"Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost?" is the serious question, which the Church of England asks of all her candidates for the ministry. Let him who would answer it conscientiously, ask his own heart, what he feels of Bernard's description, which, if not an accurate answer to the question, may, however, furnish the attentive reader with some salutary contemplations. "He who is called to instruct souls, is called of God, and not by his own ambition; and what is this call, but an inward incentive of love, soliciting us to be zealous for the salvation of our brethren? So often as he, who is engaged in preaching the Word, shall feel his inward man to be excited with divine affections, so often let him assure himself that God is there, and that he is invited by him to seek the good of souls. Truly, I love to hear that preacher, who does not move me to applaud his eloquence, but to groan for my sins. Efficacy will be given to your voice, if you appear to be yourself per-

* B. 2. C. 15. *Florum Bernardi*. A small treatise, from which are extracted some of the most beautiful passages of this author.

suaded of that, to which you advise me. That common rebuke will then at least belong not to you;—‘thou who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself*?’”

See how divinely he describes the grace of God in the Gospel. “Happy is he alone, to whom the Lord imputeth not sin. To have him propitious to me, against whom alone I have sinned, suffices for all my righteousness. Not to impute my sins, is, as it were, to blot out their existence. If my iniquity is great, thy grace is much greater. When my soul is troubled at the view of her sinfulness, I look at thy mercy, and am refreshed. It lies in common; it is offered to all, and he only who rejects it, is deprived of its benefit. Let him rejoice, who feels himself a wretch deserving of perpetual damnation. For the grace of Jesus still exceeds the quantity or number of all crimes. My punishment, says Cain, is too great for me to expect pardon. Far be the thought. The grace of God is greater than any iniquity whatever. He is really kind and merciful, plenteous in goodness, ready to forgive. His very nature is goodness; his property is to have mercy. Indeed he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. But mercy he draws from his own nature; condemnation is a work to which we in a measure compel him. He is, therefore, not called the Father of vengeance, but the FATHER OF MERCIES†.”

The following thought, concerning temptations, is striking. “In creation, in redemption, and other common benefits, God is common to all; in temptations, the elect have him to themselves. With such special care does he support and deliver, that he may seem, as it were, neglecting all others, to confine his care to the tempted soul‡.”

We have already given a small specimen of his own experience, in regard to the various operations of the Holy Spirit. From different sermons we may now see the practical use which he makes of the doctrine. “It is a dangerous thing,” says he, “to be insensible of the presence or absence of the Holy Spirit. For how shall his presence be sought, whose absence is not

* In Cantic. Serm. 58. p. 156. *Florum.*

† From various Serm. *Flor.* 229.

‡ *Flor.* 257.

known? And how shall he, who returns to console us, be worthily received, if his presence be not felt? May the unction, therefore, be never removed from us, the unction* which teaches us of all things, that when the Holy Spirit comes he may find us ready. He who walks in the Spirit never remains in one state. His way is not in himself; but as the Spirit dispenses to him, according to his good pleasure, now more faintly, now more eagerly, he forgets the things which are behind, and reaches forth to the things which are before. Distrust not, when thou findest weariness and torpor; seek the hand of thy Guide, beseeching him to draw thee, till thou be enabled to run the way of God's commandments. And, on the other hand, beware of presumptuous confidence, when thou walkest in the light of divine consolation, lest, when he withdraws his hand, thou be more dejected than it becomes a Christian to be †."

The divine life was then, it seems, understood, in the twelfth century, that same life which is felt in all ages by holy men, which has its foundations in the genuine doctrines of grace, which alone produces true virtue upon earth, which is the comfort of real Christians, and the ridicule of mere philosophers, whether nominally Christians or not, and which will issue in heavenly glory. That after the greatest attainments and the most earnest efforts, a Christian should still feel himself infected with sin, has often been matter of great vexation and surprise to the most pious and the most intelligent persons. Great mistakes have been committed on this subject; some have, at length, induced themselves to believe, that in-dwelling sin has been totally expelled from their breasts; others have given themselves up to unprofitable solicitude and dejection. A great part of the mystery of practical godliness lies, no doubt, in the due conception of the case, and in the practical regulation of the heart, concerning it. Let us hear Bernard on this point; he speaks in unison with the soundest Christians in all ages; and, what is more, with St. Paul, in Rom. vii. "Let no man say in his heart, these are small evils; I care not for them; it is no great matter, if I remain in

* 1 John ii. 27.

† Id. 44, &c.

these venial sins. This is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and confirmed impenitence. On the other hand, evil cannot altogether be eradicated or extirpated from our hearts, while we are in the world. However great thy proficiency, thou art mistaken, if thou think sin to be dead. Whether thou wilt or not, the Jebusite will dwell within thy borders. He may be subdued, not exterminated. Sin, the disease of the soul, cannot be taken away, till we are freed from the body. By the grace of God it may be repressed, so that it shall not REIGN in us, but it is ejected only at death.—In many things we offend all*: let no man despise or neglect these evils; nor yet should the Christian be too solicitous concerning them; He will forgive us even with pleasure, provided we confess our guilt. In these evils of daily incursion, negligence is culpable, and so is immoderate fear; for there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus†, and who consent not to the motions of concupiscence. That we may be humble, the Lord suffers concupiscence itself still to live in us, and grievously to afflict us, that we may feel what grace can do for us, and may always have recourse to his aid‡.” Such were the humble sentiments of this holy personage concerning this subject, and so equally remote was he from the delusive pride of the Perfectionist, and the flagitious negligence of the Antinomian.

I shall conclude this review of Bernard's works, with a short extract||, which expresses the foundation of his Christian hopes; and it is that, in which all real Christians, in all ages, will cordially concur with him. “I consider three things, in which all my hope consists, the love of adoption, the truth of the promise, and the power of performance. Let my foolish heart murmur as much as it please, and say, Who art thou, and how great is that glory, or by what merits dost thou expect to obtain it? I will confidently answer, I know whom I have believed, and I am certain, that he hath adopted me in love; that he is true in promise; that he is powerful to fulfil it; for he can do what he pleaseth.

* James iii. 2.

† Rom. viii. 1.

‡ Flor. 373.

|| De Evang. Serm. 5.

This is the threefold cord, which is not easily broken, which being let down to us from our heavenly country to earth, I pray that we may firmly hold, and may he himself lift us up, and draw us completely to the glory of God, who is blessed for ever."

CHAP. V.

DEATH AND CHARACTER OF BERNARD.

No one of the ancient fathers seems to have had so little justice done to his memory as Bernard. He lived in an age so ignorant and superstitious, that Protestants are ready to ask, Can any good thing come out of the twelfth century? It is difficult, indeed, to say, whether he has been more injured by the extravagant encomiums of some, or by the illiberal censures of others. Even the fictitious miracles, of which the wretched accounts of his biographers are full, indirectly asperse his character, and by no uncommon association of ideas, seem to detract all credibility from the best attested narratives of his piety and virtue. While then Papists represent him as an angel, and Protestants as a narrow bigot, or a furious zealot, those who know nothing more of him than what they have learned from the prejudice of opposite extremes, are tempted to think him an object worthy of contempt, if not of detestation.

The great Roman historian, in a beautiful fragment preserved to us concerning the death of Cicero, observes, that to celebrate his character, as it deserves, a Cicero himself should be found as panegyrist*. A somewhat similar observation may be made concerning Bernard; and happily his voluminous writings, which have escaped the ravages of time, vindicate his reputation, and exhibit him to us with faithfulness and accuracy. It was necessary to be brief in my extracts; else much more numerous proofs of his genuine piety, humility, and charity, than those which the reader hath already seen, might have been adduced. Nor have I concealed his superstitious turn of mind, and the unhappy prejudices, which induced him to censure some of those, of whom

* Cicerone quidem laudatore opus esset. Liv. fragm.

“the world was not worthy,” and with whose true character he was unacquainted. He was deeply tinged with a predilection for the Roman hierarchy; he had imbibed most of those errors of his time, which were not directly subversive of the Gospel; and the monastic character, which, according to the spirit of the age appeared to be the greatest glory, seems to have much eclipsed his real virtues, and prevented his progress in true evangelical wisdom.

But if we strip him of the ascetic vest, and consider the interior endowments, he will appear to have been no mean or ordinary character. His learning was moderate; but his understanding was solid, and his judgment seldom erred in subjects or cases, where the prejudices of the age did not warp the imagination. His genius was truly sublime, his temper sanguine, his mind active and vigorous. The love of God appears to have taken deep root in his soul, and seems to have been always steady, though always ardent. His charity was equal to his zeal; and his tenderness and compassion to Christian brethren went hand in hand with his severity against the heretical, the profane, and the vicious. In humility he was truly admirable; he scarcely seems to have felt a glimpse of pleasure on account of the extravagant praises every where bestowed upon him. His heart felt dependance on Christ, and his heavenly affections were incontestably strong. He united much true Christian knowledge with much superstition; and this can hardly be accounted for on any other supposition, than that he was directed by an influence truly divine. For there is not an essential doctrine of the Gospel, which he did not embrace with zeal, defend by argument, and adorn by life. Socinianism in particular, under God, was by his means nipped in the bud, and prevented from thriving in the Christian world. Such was Bernard, who is generally called the last of the fathers.

The accounts of his death, considered as compositions, are no less disgusting to a taste of tolerable correctness, than those of his life. While his friends admired him as an angel, he felt himself, by nature, a sinful fallen creature. He was about

Death of
Bernard,

A.D. 1153.

sixty-three years old when he died of a disease in the stomach. A letter which he dictated to a friend, a very few days before his decease, is worthy of our attention, as a genuine monument of that simplicity, modesty, and piety, which had adorned his conversation. "I received your love, with affection, I cannot say with pleasure; for what pleasure can there be to a person in circumstances replete with bitterness? To eat nothing solid, is the only way to preserve myself tolerably easy. My sensitive powers admit of no further pleasure. I am not able to close my eyes: sleep hath departed from me: and no longer procures for me the least intermission of my pain. Stomachic weakness is, as it were, the sum total of my afflictions. By day and night I receive a small portion of liquids. Every thing solid the stomach rejects. The very scanty supply, which I now and then receive is painful; but perfect emptiness would be still more so. If now and then I take in a larger quantity, the effect is most distressing. My legs and feet are swoln, as in a dropsy. In the midst of these afflictions, that I may hide nothing from an anxious friend, in my inner man—I speak as a vulgar person—the spirit is ready, though the flesh be weak. Pray ye to the Saviour, who willeth not the death of a sinner, that he would not delay my timely exit, but that still he would guard it. Fortify with your prayers a poor unworthy creature, that the enemy who lies in wait may find no place where he may fix his tooth, and inflict a wound. These words I have dictated, but in such a manner, that ye may know my affection by a hand well known to you*." Such were the dying circumstances of this excellent Saint. So peculiarly were they disposed, that they seemed to rebuke the ignorant admiration of his friends; and thus, through faith and patience, did he at length inherit the promises†.

* Vol. II. p. 1170.

† Many miracles are ascribed to Bernard by the Romish Church. He is looked on as the last of the holy Fathers; and is said to have founded 160 monasteries.

CHAP. VI.

GENERAL STATE OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

THIS may, in a great measure, be collected, so far as the Latin Church is concerned, from the copious account which has been given of Bernard. Of the Greek Church hardly any thing occurs which properly falls within the design of this history. Superstition, idolatry, frivolous contentions, and metaphysical niceties, attended with a lamentable want of true piety and virtue, form almost the whole of the religious phenomena in the east.

In this chaos of the Church, I can only mention a few facts and circumstances, which may throw some lights on its general state; and they shall be such as have not been considered in the history of Bernard, nor directly relate to the Waldenses, whose affairs commenced in the latter part of this century, but will deserve a strict narration.

Just at the close of the foregoing century, pope Urban* held a synod of one hundred and fifty bishops, in order to promote the Crusades, and exhorted the Christian world to concur in supporting the same cause. He died in the year 1099, and Jerusalem was taken by the crusaders in the same year†. The pale of the visible Church was extended by the conquests of the western warriors, and several episcopal Sees were again formed in regions, whence the light of the Gospel had first arisen to bless mankind. But these were of short duration; and, what is much more material to be observed, while they continued, they gave no evidence, that I can find, of the spirit of true religion. This is a circumstance, which throws a very displeasing shade on the whole character of the fanatical war which at that time agitated both Europe and Asia. I have exculpated the western Christians from the charge of positive injustice in undertaking it; in every other light it deserves much of the asperity of the censure, with which modern authors in general agree to treat it. Among a thousand evils

Death of
Urban, and
the taking
of Jerusa-
lem by the
Crusaders,
A. D. 1099.

* This pope, viz. Urban II. held the famous council here mentioned, at Clermont in Auvergne, A. D. 1095, for the recovery of the Holy Land.

† Baronius, Cent. XII.

which it produced, or at least encouraged, this was one, namely, that indulgences were now diffused by the popes through Europe, for the purpose of promoting what they called the holy war. These had indeed been sold before by the inferior dignitaries of the Church, who, for money, remitted the penalties imposed on transgressors: they had not, however, pretended to abolish the punishments, which await the wicked in a future state. This impiety was reserved to the pope himself, who dared to usurp the authority which belongs to God alone. The corruption having once taken place, remained and even increased from age to age, till the time of the Reformation. It is needless to say, how subversive of all piety and virtue this practice must have been. That the Romanists did really promote this impious traffic is but too evident from their own writers*. Hence the strict propriety of St. Paul's representation of the man of sin, AS SHOWING HIMSELF THAT HE IS GOD†, is evinced; hence, the characters of those, who opposed the power and doctrine of popery in those times, receive the most ample vindication, and hence the merit of the Reformation itself may, in a great measure, be appreciated. I only add, that the whole discipline of the Church was now dissolved, and men, who had means to purchase a license to sin, were emboldened to let loose the reins of vice, and follow, at large, their own desires and imaginations.

Nor were these evils compensated by some other circumstances, which tended to promote the revival of learning in this age. Gratian, a native of Tuscany, and a monk of Bologna, made a famous collection of canon laws, and published them in A. D. 1151. Justinian's Pandects discovered, 1151. His work was much facilitated by the discovery of the pandects of the emperor Justinian, which took place in 1137‡. Ecclesiastical causes were henceforward tried by the canon law. To encourage the study of this science, the degrees of bachelor, licentiate, and doctor, degrees mentioned by no

* See Mosheim, Cent XII. p. 595. Qu. Edit. Morinus, Simon, and Mabillon, are the popish authors, who are not ashamed to vindicate this system of iniquity.

† 2 Thess. ii.

‡ Mosheim, Cent. XII. p. 567. Bower's Lives of Popes, Vol. VI. p. 69. Du Pin, Cent. XII. Chap. XVII.

writer before the time of Gratian, were instituted by pope Eugenius III. the disciple of Bernard. But they were soon after introduced at Paris by Peter Lombard, who was called the master of the sentences, and were bestowed on students of divinity as well as of law. For Lombard was supposed to have performed the same service to divinity, which Gratian, his contemporary, had done to law. Paris and Bologna, the former in divinity, and the latter in law, were now looked on as the greatest seminaries in Europe. In this revival of learning our own island also bore a part. The university of Oxford, which had been founded in the time of Alfred, and had suffered much from the ravages of the Danes, came to a considerable degree of eminence in this century. The learning, as well as the impiety of the Continent, passed into England, and we shall shortly see a dreadful instance of the effects of both appearing in the university last mentioned. For while the real word of God was generally neglected, and the salutary doctrine of the Gospel was buried in darkness, the literary improvements of the times might sharpen the intellectual faculties, but could produce no benign effects on the manners of mankind. To finish this brief detail of the progress of learning, I shall add, that Cambridge had begun to be a seminary of learning some little time after Oxford, but in that view had been quite oppressed by the incursions of the Danes. It revived, however, in some degree, about the year 1109, when Gislebert, with three other monks, was sent by the abbot of Croyland to his manor of Cottenham, near Cambridge. These monks went every day to Cambridge, where they hired a barn as a convenient place for public lectures. One read grammar in the morning, a second read logic at one o'clock, and a third, at three in the afternoon, gave lectures on rhetoric from Tully and Quintilian. Gislebert himself preached on Sundays, and other holidays. The barn was soon found insufficient to contain the auditors; and, therefore, accommodations were provided for the labours of these men in different parts of the town. Such is the account which Peter of Blois gives of the infant state of learning in the university of Cambridge.

Learning
revives at
Cambridge,
A. D. 1109.

The laudable passion for intellectual improvement was

strong in this century. In the room of the Fathers succeeded the Schoolmen, whose theology was founded by Peter Lombard. A metaphysical subtilty pervaded their investigations, and they were idolized by the ignorant, among whom should be ranked the nobility of that age, almost as much as the plebeians. The human mind, however, by exercise, recovered a new tone and vigour; but learning could not communicate grace, nor even enable men to see the folly of enslaving themselves to the pope-dom. The influence of the bishop of Rome grew prodigious: the emperors of Germany trembled under the rod; and some of the bravest and wisest of the English princes were found unequal to a contest with the hierarchy. But to dwell on these scenes would be to forsake the path of Church-history.

Where THEN was the Church of Christ, and what was its condition? In the general appearance of national religion she was not to be discovered. God had, however, his SECRET ONES. There might be, and probably there were, in vulgar life, various persons too poor and too insignificant to be regarded in history, who feared God and served him in the Gospel of his Son, but whom an humble station in society secured from persecution. There were also here and there some of the recluse, who practised something better than superstition. The story of Bernard has given us an illustrious instance. In the west, we have seen also the Cathari, who formed religious societies among themselves. These increased exceedingly, and assuming a new name, much better known in the latter part of the century *, were exposed to the unrighteous indignation of the then reigning powers, both in church and state. The account of this persecution will demand our particular attention, when we come to the next century. Thus the Church of Christ had a real existence in the west, and shone as a light in a dark place. In the east it is extremely difficult to discover the least vestiges of genuine piety. It is probable, however, that the Church existed among the remains of the Paulicians. For in the year 1118, Alexius Comnenus, who had zealously persecuted this people in the latter end of the fore-

* Waldenses.

going century, burned a supposed Manichee, who was charged with maintaining all the absurdities of Manes. We have the account from the female historian, his own daughter, Anna Comnena, who every where idolizes the character of her father*. The supposed heretic, however, it ought to be known, rejected the worship of images as idolatry†; a circumstance, which at least affords a strong presumption in favour of his Christian character. The reader will hence be led to believe it not improbable, that there were even then some relics of a Church of God in the east. If he complain that the evidence is scanty, I can only lament that history affords no more. And if he recollect the account given of the Cathari in the memoirs of Bernard, and consider them as properly belonging to this place, he will see, that the prophecy of Christ concerning his Church, “that the gates of hell should never prevail against it,” had its real completion even in the dark times which we are reviewing.

Burning of
a supposed
Manichee,
A.D. 1118.

It is no small consolation to the mind of a true believer, that the most disastrous, as well as the most glorious scenes of the Church, are predicted in Scripture. The evidence of prophecy constantly accompanies the light of history, and “behold I have told you before,” is the voice of our Saviour, which we hear in every age. In a council held at London in 1108, in the reign of our Henry I. a decree was issued against clerks who should cohabit with women‡. This council did not mean to give an attestation to the truth of the prophecy of St. Paul, concerning the apostacy of the latter days, one circumstance of which was the prohibition of marriage||, but they fulfilled the prophecy in the clearest manner. The voices of natural conscience and of common sense were, however, by no means altogether silenced during this gloomy season. Fluentius, bishop of Florence§, taught publicly, that Antichrist was born, and come into the world; on which account pope Paschal II. held a council there in the year

Decree of a
Council in
London
against the
marriage of
clerks,
A. D. 1108.

Pope Paschal
II. silences
the Bishop of
Florence,
A. D. 1105.

* Anna Comnena, B. XV.

† Baron. Cent. XII.

§ See Bp. Newton on the Prophecies, Vol. III. p. 167.

† Baron. Cent. XII.

|| 1 Tim. iv.

1105, reprimanded the bishop, and enjoined him silence on that subject. Even Bernard himself inveighed so strongly against the popes and the clergy, that nothing but the obstinate prejudices of education prevented him from seeing the whole truth in this matter. It was natural for men, who revered the Scriptures, and who compared what they read of Antichrist with what they saw in the Church of Rome, to express some suspicions, that the prophecy was then fulfilling, though the glare of fictitious holiness, which covered the pope-dom, prevented them from beholding their object with perspicuity.

Our own island was rapidly advancing all this century into a state of deplorable subjection to the Roman See.

Men of solid understanding, like our Henry II. lamented, struggled, and resisted, but with little effect. They felt the temporal oppression of ecclesiastical tyranny, while they were perfectly regardless of their own spiritual misery, and even aided the court of Rome in the persecution of real Christians. That same Henry II. who made so firm a stand against papal encroachments in civil matters, in the twenty-fourth year of his reign, joined with the French king in persecuting the Cathari of Toulouse, who were injuriously denominated Arians* ; and, while he abused and perverted one of the finest understandings by a life of ambition and lewdness, and by supporting idolatrous religion, he himself was exposed to the severest sufferings from the papal usurpations. One instance of his barbarity deserves to be distinctly related.

Thirty men and women, who were Germans, appeared in England in the year 1159, and were afterwards brought before a council of the clergy at Oxford. Gerard their teacher, a man of learning, said, that they were Christians, and believed the doctrine of the Apostles. They expressed an abhorrence of the doctrine of purgatory, of prayers for the dead, and of the invocation of Saints. Henry, in conjunction with the council, ordered them to be branded with a hot iron on the forehead, to be whipped through Oxford, to have

State of the
Church in
England.

Persecu-
tions by
Henry II.

A. D. 1159.

* Hoveden, p. 327.

their clothes cut short by their girdles, and to be turned into the open fields; and he likewise forbad any persons, under severe penalties, to shelter or relieve them. As it was the depth of winter, they all lost their lives through cold and hunger*. They had made one female convert in England, who, through fear of similar punishment, recanted. The whole number of the Germans remained, however, patient, serene, and composed, repeating, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Their teacher Gerard, that he might be distinguished from the rest, had an additional stigma on his chin.

What a darkness must at that time have filled this island! A wise and sagacious king, a renowned university, the whole body of the clergy and laity, all united in expelling Christ from their coasts! Brief as is the account of the martyrs, it is sufficiently evident that they were the martyrs of Christ. Driven most probably from home by the rage of persecution, they had brought the light and power of the Gospel with them into England; and so totally senseless and corrupt was our nation, that none received it. It deserves to be noticed, that England was afterwards for a long time exposed to suffer more severely than most other nations, from the exactions of the popedom.

Mr. Berington observes, on occasion of this story, that none but a hero or a madman was at that time qualified to be a reformer. But a true reformer needs not to be either the one or the other. A man of understanding, who fears God, and speaks the words of soberness, if influenced by the Spirit of God, is fitted to reform mankind.

The contention between King Henry and Becket is well known. I have nothing to say of it, except that the whole affair is foreign to my purpose. There is no evidence that a spirit of true religion influenced either the king or the archbishop.

The pope, indeed, reigned calm and victorious throughout Europe. Nevertheless, even in Italy itself, some suspicions that he was Antichrist appeared. Joachim, abbot of Calabria, was a man renowned for learning and piety,

* Neubrig. Brompt. Collect. See Henry's Hist. of Eng. Vol. III. p. 240.

and perhaps very deservedly. This man asserted that Antichrist was born in the Roman state, and would be exalted to the Apostolic See*. Our king Richard I. being at Messina in Sicily, going upon his expedition to the Holy Land, sent for this Joachim, and with much satisfaction heard him explain the Book of the Revelation, and discourse of Antichrist. Mr. Berington gives a ludicrous account of this interview between the king and the abbot; and observes, that the "bishops who were present, and Richard, and Joachim, were equally intelligent in the mysteries of the Evangelist with any other interpreters of that day †." This gentleman is a lively, agreeable writer, and has exerted a capacity, learning, and industry, to which I have been obliged on several occasions. But the rude treatment of any part of the word of God deserves to be rebuked, whether he, who is guilty of it, be a Roman Catholic or a Protestant, or a sceptic in religion. I doubt not but some of his readers, who never examined the subject with the least attention, will be gratified with the pleasantry of his remark. But let them be told that part of the Apocalypse is very intelligible, even at present: and that all of it will probably be so before the end of time. And is not all Scripture said to be profitable? ‡ It behoved not a man professing Christianity, to throw out innuendos which might have been expected only from an avowed infidel. Has the author ever examined with care the writings of expositors on the Apocalypse? Did he ever attend to Mr. Mede's elaborate and learned works on the subject? Did Sir Isaac Newton's observations on the Apocalypse ever fall into his hands? Or, to come to later times, has he ever studied the works of bishop Newton, bishop Hurd, or the late bishop Hallifax? Let him attend to any one of these, and having digested his scheme, let him then say, if he can, that our ignorant king Richard I. was as intelligent an expositor as he.

If this same Richard had been as earnest in studying the Scriptures, as he was in conducting his romantic expedition into the Holy Land, by comparing the Apo-

* Hoveden, p. 681. Collier's Ecc. Hist. B. VI. p. 401.

† Hist. of Henry II. &c. p. 375.

‡ 2 Tim. iii. 16.

calyptic prophecies with the treatment which he himself received from the pope, he might have understood that the bishop of Rome was Antichrist. For, in a bull dated 1197, Innocent III. declared, that it was not fit that any man should be invested with authority who did not revere and obey the Holy See. In another bull, addressed to Richard, he told him, that if he opposed the execution of the decrees of the Apostolic See, he would soon convince him how hard it was to kick against the pricks. In another bull, he declared that he would not endure the least contempt of himself, or of God, whose place he held on earth, but would punish every disobedience without delay, and without respect of persons; and would convince the whole world that he was determined to act like a sovereign*. The "lion-hearted" Richard obeyed his decrees, and gave up his opposition in the cause which he had contested. Innocent, indeed, reigned in England with a power little less than despotic. This was the pope, who confirmed the doctrine of transubstantiation in the grossest sense, who reduced the two succeeding princes John and Henry III. into a state of the lowest vassalage to himself, and who enriched his creatures with the treasures of England, almost entirely at his pleasure.

Bull of
Pope Inno-
cent III.
A.D. 1197.

Other Bulls
of the same
Pope.

CHAP. VII.

THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL.

THE pale of the visible Church was still farther extended in this century among the idolatrous nations; and, though the methods of propagating divine truth were too often unchristian, some missionaries seem to have been actuated by an apostolical spirit. The articles under this head are only few, but well deserve the reader's attention.

Boleslaus, duke of Poland, having taken Stettin the capital of Pomerania, by storm, and laid waste the country with fire and sword, compelled the remaining inhabitants to submit at discretion. What right he had to make war

* Gervas Chronicle. See Henry's 3d Vol. of Hist. of Eng.

on the Pomeranians at all, and if he had a right, how far he confined himself within the bounds of justice and humanity, are inquiries not easy to be answered, on account of the scantiness of our information. From such inauspicious beginnings, however, Pomerania was introduced to an acquaintance with Christianity. The conqueror endeavoured, for three years, to procure pastors and teachers from his own dominions, to instruct his new subjects, but could find none. He then engaged Otho, bishop

Otho's
mission to
Pomerania,
A.D. 1124.

of Bamberg, in the work. The duke of Pomerania met the bishop on his approach, and received him with much respect. The savage inhabitants, however, were with difficulty prevented from murdering him. Otho was firm, and by Christian zeal, patience, and meekness, laboured to efface the disadvantageous impressions which the military executions of Boleslaus could not fail to make on their minds. The duchess of Pomerania, with her female attendants, received the Gospel. So did the duke, with his companions, and he gave this evidence of sincerity, that he was prevailed on by the instructions of Otho to dismiss his concubines, who were twenty-four in number. This missionary was afterwards fiercely assaulted by some of the inhabitants, and escaped with great difficulty. But he bore the injury so meekly, and still persevered in his labours with such evident marks of probity and charity, that he at length established the form of Christianity among them. He* had entered on his mission in the year 1124, and from his suc-

Otho re-
turns to his
flock at
Bamberg,
and dies,

A.D. 1139.

cess, was styled the apostle of the Pomeranians†. After he had carried the Gospel into Noim and other remote districts, he returned to the care of his own flock at Bamberg, where he died in 1139‡. That the work, however, was very slight among this people, appeared too plainly by the event. The Pomeranians soon after ejected the Christian pastors, and re-established the idolatry of their ancestors.

The inhabitants of Rugen, an island which lies in the neighbourhood of Pomerania, were remarkable for their obstinate opposition to Christianity. Eric, king of Den-

* Cent. Magd. Cent. XII. p. 16.

† Baronius, Cent. XII. See Magd. Cent.

‡ Butler, Vol. VII.

mark, subdued them, and among other conditions of peace, imposed on them the necessity of receiving his religion. But they soon relapsed into the idolatry of their ancestors. At length Waldemar, king of Denmark, having subjected them again by his arms to the Danish crown, obliged them to deliver up to him their idol, called Swanterwith, an account of which we have seen in the history of the tenth century. Waldemar ordered it to be hewn in pieces and burned. He compelled the vanquished also to deliver to him all their sacred money: he released the Christian captives whom they held in slavery, and converted the lands which had been assigned to the pagan priests, to the support of a Christian ministry. He did also something which was of a more salutary nature and tendency, whatever were his own motives of conduct. He furnished the ignorant savages with pastors and teachers. Among these shone Absalom, archbishop of Lunden, by whose pious labours, at length, the Gospel received an establishment in this island, which had so long baffled every attempt to evangelize it. Absalom* ought to be classed among those genuine benefactors of mankind, who were willing to spend and be spent for the good of souls. Even Jaremar, the prince of Rugen, received the Gospel with great alacrity, and not only taught his wayward subjects by his life and example, but also by his useful instructions and admonitions. Sometimes he employed menaces, but to what degree, and with what circumstances, I know not. Certain it is, that the people of Rugen from that time were in some sense, at least, evangelized. No people had ever shown a more obstinate aversion to the doctrines of Christianity. Nor were the military proceedings of Eric and Waldemar calculated to soften their animosity. In this article, however, as in the last, the characters of the missionaries ought to be distinguished from those of the princes; for, in the accounts of both the missionaries there appears very good evidence of a genuine propagation of godliness. These events in Rugen took place about the year 1168†. When I distinguish the characters of the princes from that

Rugen in
some mea-
sure evan-
gelized,
A.D. 1168.

* Mosheim, Cent. XII. 351. Cent. Magd. Cent. XII. 13.

† Butler, Vol. X.

of the missionaries, I am by no means certain that the conduct of the former was unjustifiable. The people of Rugen were a band of pirates and robbers; and it is not improbable, but that the right of self-preservation might authorize the Danish expeditions.

The Finlanders were of the same character with the people of Rugen, and infested Sweden with their incursions. Eric, king of this country, vanquished them in war, and is said to have wept, because his enemies died unbaptized. As soon as he was master of Finland, he sent Henry, bishop of Upsal, to evangelize the barbarians. The success of the missionary was great, and he is called the apostle of the Finlanders, though he was murdered at length by some of the refractory people. How far the censure of Mosheim, on his severity to them, may be well founded, I cannot decide. The missionary seems, however, to have been pious, and to have had good intentions. The laudable conduct of his sovereign also deserves to be celebrated. Eric was excellent both as a Christian and a king. His piety provoked the derision of some impious malcontents, by whom he was attacked, while employed in public worship. The remainder of the festival, said he, I shall observe elsewhere. It was the feast of the Ascension, which he was celebrating. He went out alone to meet the murderers, that he might prevent the effusion of blood, and he died recommending his soul to God. He was slain in 1151; and his tomb still remains at Upsal, undefaced*. It may be proper to add, that Henry was an Englishman, who had taken considerable pains among the barbarous nations, before the period of his labours in Finland, and that he was stoned to death at the instigation of a murderer, whom he had endeavoured to reclaim by his censures. His death happened in the same year as that of his royal master†. This person is highly extolled by John Olaus, in his work, *De rebus Gothicis*‡.

Murder of
Eric,

A.D. 1151.

Henry,
bishop of
Upsal, murdered in
the same
year.

The Slavonians were remarkably averse to the Gospel

* Mosheim, Cent. XII. 552. Butler, Vol. V.

† His life was written by Benzelius Monum. Suec. p. 33. Butler, Vol. II.

‡ B. 19. C. 3. See Baron. Cent. XII.

of Christ, and much exercised the patience and charity of Vicelinus, who preached thirty years in Holsatia and the neighbouring parts. He was at length appointed bishop of Oldenburg, which See was afterwards transferred to Lubec: and the fruits of his ministry were solid and glorious*. He died in 1154. All the accounts of antiquity are full of the praises of Vicelinus; and his character is briefly, but very strongly celebrated by Mosheim, with such unqualified commendations, that I cannot but wish that very learned historian had favoured us with an abridgment of his life and actions, taken from the sources of information which he quotes, but which seem to us inaccessible. I have consulted the Centuriators, and find matter there sufficient to excite, but not to satisfy our curiosity. The little to be collected from them shall be mentioned in the next chapter. And here is an instance of that which I have had but too frequent occasion to remark, namely, an extreme scantiness of information on subjects most worthy of our researches. How willingly would the evangelical reader have excused the omission of many pages in Mosheim, if he had gratified us with an orderly account of one of the best and wisest Christian missionaries of the age†.

Vicelinus, a very shining character, who laboured thirty years among the Sclavonians. He died, A.D. 1154.

The propagation of religion in Livonia will not deserve any detail. It took place in the latter part of this century: violent and secular methods were principally used, and the wretched inhabitants were compelled to receive baptism‡; but I know no fruits that appeared in this century worthy of the Christian name.

* Baron. Cent. XII.

† See Cent. Magd. 16. Mosheim, Cent. XII. 554. The authors quoted by Mosheim are the *Cimbria literata* of Mollerus, and the *Res Hamburg.* of Lambecius.

‡ Cent. Magd.

CHAP. VIII.

WRITERS AND EMINENT PERSONS IN THIS CENTURY.

BERNARD far outshines all the other Christian characters of the age. A very brief survey, however, of some who had the greatest reputation for piety, may not be improper.

Meginher, archbishop of Treves, is a character, of whom it were to be wished we had a more distinct account. He inveighed against the luxury and sensuality of his clergy, and so provoked their resentment, that he was obliged to undertake a journey to Rome in his own defence. By the treachery of his own clergy he was intercepted on the road, and died in prison at Parma in the year 1130*. If we had the particulars of these trans-
Meginher
dies in prison,
A.D. 1130. actions, it is probable that he would appear to have resembled Chrysostom in his integrity, as well as in his sufferings. Meginher deserves, however, to be mentioned, because his case evinces how unsafe it was in those days to defend Christian piety, even in the midst of the visible Church of Christ.

About the same time a presbyter, named Arnulph, came to Rome, and faithfully preached against the vices of the clergy. He was himself a man of unblameable life and conversation, and zealously laboured to induce the pastors of the Church to imitate the simplicity and disinterestedness of the primitive Christians. He seems to have foreseen that he should suffer for righteousness sake. "I know," said he publicly, "that ye seek my life. Ye despise me and your Creator, who redeemed you by his only begotten Son. Nor is it to be wondered at, that ye should kill me a sinful man, who speaks to you the truth, since, if St. Peter himself were to rise from the dead, and rebuke your multiplied enormities, ye would not spare him." Arnulph was secretly murdered, and appears to have been a faithful martyr†.

The orthodox sentiments of the Godhead and manhood of Jesus Christ, and the influence of both natures in the redemption, were clearly and soundly vindicated by Ricardus, in a treatise concerning the Incarnation‡.

* Cent. Magd. Cent. XII. 23.

† Cent. Magd. 23.

‡ Id. 98.

Rupert, in this century, writing on the Gospel of St. John, observes, on occasion of our Lord's declaring in the xivth chapter of St. John, that the world neither see nor know the Holy Spirit; "that they see him not, arises from their unbelief; that they know him not, proceeds from their pride. Infidelity regards nothing but what is present; and pride approves not of such a comforter, nay, reckons the life of those who seek his consolations to be madness, and their end to be without honour."

Peter Alphonsus, a Jew, was converted in the year 1106, in the forty-fourth year of his age. Being severely censured by his countrymen, he published a dialogue against the Jews, which seems to have been no contemptible defence of Christianity against his countrymen *. This man was eminent for sacred and profane literature, and it is hoped, became a real ornament to Christianity †.

Peter Alphonsus, a Jew, converted, A.D. 1106.

Whoever in this degenerate age acted faithfully in the ministry, exposed himself to imminent danger. This was the case of Heinricus, bishop of Mentz. He was a rare pattern of meekness, integrity, and charity. But, through the unjust accusation of his clergy, he was deprived of his bishopric by the authority of two cardinals at Worms. "I know," said he, "if I were to appeal to the pope, it would be in vain. I appeal, therefore, to Jesus Christ, the just Judge of quick and dead, who neither accepts persons, nor receives bribes as you do." After his expulsion from his See, which he had held near nine years, he retired to a monastery in Saxony, and lived in privacy and retirement, but without taking upon him the monastic habit, and died in 1153 †.

Heinricus expelled from his bishopric at Mentz, dies in a monastery, A.D. 1153.

Vicelinus, before mentioned, was born at an obscure town on the banks of the Weser, in the diocese of Minden. Having met with a sarcastic reproof from a priest, in his youth, on account of his indolence and ignorance, he was roused to pay the greatest attention to the cultivation of his understanding. Many in that age were equally studious; but Vicelinus was singularly eminent in directing his studies to practical purposes, and to the

* Du Pin, 170.

† Cent. Magd. 704.

‡ Id. 710.

cultivation of genuine piety, and in avoiding the miserable strife of metaphysical subtilties, to which men of learning were then generally addicted. The scene of his evangelical labours was Holstein, in the kingdom of Denmark: there he taught men to turn from idols to the living God; for the Holsatians had known nothing of Christianity, but the name: they worshipped groves, fountains, and various vanities. The success of Vice-

Vicelinus
made bishop
of Olden-
burgh,

A.D. 1128.

linus seems to have been solid and lasting: many pagans all around, and particularly the Vandals, were induced to receive Christianity.

After he had laboured thirty years in Holstein and the neighbouring parts, he was appointed bishop of Oldenburgh in the year 1128. He still continued near six years in the same course of evangelical

labour, in which he had persevered so long be-

A.D. 1154. fore, but was at length confined to his bed by a palsy for upwards of two years, and died in the year 1154*.

Anselm of Havelburg was a bishop of some literary reputation, and flourished in the middle of this century. The only thing, which I find remarkable concerning him, and it gives a strong presumption in favour of his piety or understanding, or both, is this, that he saw and censured the pharisaism of the monkish institutions. He declared, that there were many in his time, successively rising up, who disapproved of the vanity and novelty† of monastic orders.

It may be proper just to mention Peter, abbot of Cluny, surnamed the venerable. That so ignorant and so trifling a writer should have been honoured with a title so magnificent, is one of the strongest marks of the low state of religious knowledge in general at that time. He takes large pains to vindicate the manners and customs of his monastery against objections; and in doing this he is so verbose and circumstantial‡, that he may seem to have placed the essence of Christianity in frivolous punctilios and insignificant ceremonies. This is he who received Peter Abelard in his afflictions with great humanity, and who consoled Eloisa after the death of that ingenious

* Cent. Magd. 748. † Id. Cent. XII. 761. ‡ Du Pin, Cent. XII. p. 79.

heretic, by sending to her, at her request, the form of Abelard's absolution *, which that unhappy woman inscribed on his sepulchre. I can only say, in the praise of Peter, that his manners were gentle, his temper very mild and humane, and that he had what in common language is concisely called A GOOD HEART.

I add Peter Lombard to the list of eminent persons of this century, though I know nothing interesting to relate of him, further than what has already been mentioned. Subtilty of argumentation was his forte ; I find no evidence of his genuine humility and piety.

Isidore of Madrid, a poor labourer of this century, was canonized by papal authority. The account of him is too scanty, to enable us to form a proper estimate of his real worth and qualifications. There must, however, have been something singularly striking in his character ; as here we have one canonization at least, which could not be the result of interested adulation. His master, John de Vargas, allowed him daily to attend the public offices of the Church ; and he, by early rising, took care that the master lost nothing of his due services : he relieved the poor by the produce of his labours : he was humble, laborious, and just ; and died near sixty years old, in the exercises of benevolence. What a Saint ! if, as may be hoped, he was principled by the faith of Jesus, and, from the heart, renounced his own righteousness as filthy rags !

Isidore
died at the
age of 60.

* Baron. Cent. XII.

CENTURY XIII.

CHAP. I.

PETER WALDO.

THE reader will recollect the account, which has been given of the Cathari*, who were evidently a people of God, in the former part of the last century. In the latter part of the same century, they received a great accession of members from the learned labours and godly zeal of Peter Waldo. In the century before us, they were gloriously distinguished by a dreadful series of persecutions, and exhibited a spectacle to the world, both of the power of divine grace, and of the malice and enmity of the world against the real Gospel of Jesus Christ. I purpose to represent, in one connected view, the history of this people to the time of the Reformation, and a little after. The spirit, doctrine, and progress of the Waldenses, will be more clearly understood by this method, than by broken and interrupted details; and the thirteenth century seems the most proper place in which their story should be introduced.

The Cathari, whom Bernard so unhappily misrepresented, were peculiarly numerous in the vallies of Piedmont. Hence the name Vaudois or Vallenses was given to them, particularly to those who inhabited the vallies of Lucerne and Angrogne. A mistake arose from similarity of names, that Peter Valdo or Waldo, was the first founder of these Churches. For the name Vallenses being easily changed into Waldenses, the Romanists improved this very easy and natural mistake into an argument against the antiquity of these Churches, and denied that they had any existence till the appearance of Waldo. During the altercations of the Papists and Protestants, it was of some consequence that this matter should be rightly stated; because the former denied that the doctrines of the latter had any existence till the days

* See pp. 42, &c.

of Luther. But from a just account of the subject, it appeared that the real Protestant doctrines existed during the dark ages of the Church, even long before Waldo's time; the proper founder of them being Claudius of Turin, the Christian hero of the ninth century*.

About the year 1160, the doctrine of transubstantiation, which, some time afterwards, Innocent III. confirmed in a very solemn manner, was required by the court of Rome to be acknowledged by all men.

A very pernicious practice of idolatry was connected with the reception of this doctrine. Men fell down before the consecrated host, and worshipped it as God: and the novelty, absurdity, and impiety of this abomination very much struck the minds of all men, who were

The Court of Rome required the doctrine of Transubstantiation to be universally acknowledged, A. D. 1160.

not dead to a sense of true religion. At this time Peter Waldo, a citizen of Lyons, appeared very courageous in opposing the innovation; though it is evident from the very imperfect account which we have of him, that it was not one single circumstance alone which influenced him in his views of reformation. It was the fear of God, in general, as a ruling principle in his own soul, and an alarming sense of the wickedness of the times, which, under the divine influence, moved him to oppose with courage the dangerous corruptions of the Hierarchy.

A providential event had given the first occasion to this reformer's concern for religion. Being assembled with some of his friends, and after supper conversing and refreshing himself among them, one of the company fell down dead on the ground, to the amazement of all that were present. From that moment it pleased God

* Dr. Allix, in his history of the ancient Church of Piedmont, has done justice to this subject. I have already made use of his learned labours, and shall again avail myself of them; though my chief source of information concerning this people will be their history, written by John Paul Perrin of Lyons, who wrote in 1618. I could have wished, that his accounts of internal religion had been more full, even though those of the persecutions had been more scanty. But there arose no writers of eminence among the Waldenses; and Perrin's history is in a great measure collected from the records of the process and proceedings against the Waldensian Churches, which were in the offices of the archbishops of Ambrun, and which were very providentially preserved. I shall not quote him in any particular passage, because I make such large use of his history in general.

that Waldo should commence a serious inquirer after divine truth. This person was an opulent merchant of Lyons, and as his concern of mind increased, and a door of usefulness to the souls of men was more and more set open before him, he abandoned his mercantile occupation, distributed his wealth to the poor, and exhorted his neighbours to seek the bread of life. The poor, who flocked to him, that they might partake of his alms, received from him the best instructions, which he was capable of communicating; and they revered the man, to whose liberality they were so much obliged, while the great and the rich both hated and despised him.

Waldo himself, however, that he might teach others effectually, needed himself to be taught; and where was instruction to be found? Men at that day might run here and there for meat, and not be satisfied. In some convents, among the many who substituted formality for power, there were particular persons, who "held the HEAD," and drew holy nourishment from him. But a secular man, like Waldo, would not easily find them out, and were he to have met with some of them, their prejudiced attachments to the See of Rome would either have prevented them from imparting to him the food which was necessary for his soul, or have led him into a course of life, by which he would, after their example, have buried his talent in a napkin. The conduct of Bernard, one of the most eminent and best of them, too plainly shows that one of these two things would have been the case. But Bernard was gone to his rest not long before this time, and seems not to have left any monastic brother behind him at all to be compared with himself. Divine Providence reserved better things for Waldo: darkened and distressed in mind and conscience, he knew that the Scriptures were given as infallible guides, and he thirsted for those sources of instruction, which at that time were in a great measure a sealed book in the Christian world. To men who understood the Latin tongue, they were accessible. But how few were these, compared with the bulk of mankind! The Latin Vulgate Bible was the only edition of the sacred book at that time in Europe; and the languages then in common use, the

French and others, however mixed with the Latin, were, properly speaking, by this time separate and distinct from it. It is a certain mark of the general negligence of the clergy in those ages, that no provision was made for the ignorant in this respect, though I do not find that there existed any penal law to forbid the reading of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue. It is certain that Waldo found means to diffuse the precious gift of the Scriptures among the people. But different accounts are given us of his manner of doing it*. His enemies assert, that some books of Scripture, having been translated from Latin into French, he assumed the office of an apostle to himself. In particular, Reinerius says, "Being somewhat learned, he taught the people the text of the New Testament." This looks so like a reluctant confession of his learning and knowledge, that I am tempted to believe the words of Matthias Illyricus, who observes: "His kindness to the poor being diffused, his love of teaching, and their love of learning growing stronger and stronger, greater crowds came to him, and he explained the Scriptures. He was himself a man of learning, so I understand from some old parchments, nor was he obliged to employ others to translate for him, as his enemies affirm." Another anonymous author tells us, likewise, that Waldo made a collection in the vulgar tongue of the passages of the ancient fathers, that he might satisfy his disciples by the testimony of the doctors against their adversaries.

But whether Waldo himself entirely performed the work, or encouraged others to do it, or what is most probable, executed it himself with the assistance of others, it is certain, that the Christian world in the West was indebted to him for the first translation of the Bible into a modern tongue, since the time that the Latin had ceased to be a living language. A most valuable gift! True reformers have ever been remarkable for a desire and endeavour to communicate knowledge among the ignorant: and it is a standing reproach to the whole popish system, that however pious and scripturally judicious some individuals of that Church have been, no pains at all were taken by it to diffuse Biblical knowledge among the

* Usher de Christ. Eccl. success. & statu.

vulgar. The praise of this work, if we except the single instance of the Slavonian version of the Scriptures, which, however, was executed by two Greek monks, and not by papists, is purely and exclusively of protestant origin in Europe, during all the ages preceding the Reformation.

As Waldo grew more acquainted with the Scriptures, he discovered, that the general practice of nominal Christians was totally abhorrent from the doctrines of the New Testament: and in particular, that a number of customs, which all the world regarded with reverence, had not only no foundation in the divine oracles, but were even condemned by them. Inflamed with equal zeal and charity, he boldly condemned the reigning vices, and the arrogance of the pope. He did more: as he himself grew in the knowledge of the true faith and love of Christ, he taught his neighbours the principles of practical godliness, and encouraged them to seek salvation by Jesus Christ.

John De Beles Mayons, the archbishop of Lyons, could not but be sensible of the tendency of these proceedings, and being jealous of the honour of the corrupt system, of which he was a distinguished member, he forbade the new reformer to teach any more, on pain of excommunication, and of being proceeded against as an heretic. Waldo replied, that though he was a layman, yet he could not be silent in a matter which concerned the salvation of men. On this reply, the archbishop endeavoured to apprehend him. But the great affection of Waldo's friends, the influence of his relations, who were men of rank, the universal regard paid to his probity and piety, and the conviction which, no doubt, many felt, that the extraordinary circumstances of the times justified his assumption of the pastoral character*, all these things

* If Waldo's friends reasoned aright in this, as I am inclined to think they did, arguing from the necessity of the case, and the strength of that divine aphorism, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," let not, however, such extraordinary cases give a sanction to many self-created teachers, who disturb rather than strengthen the hands of faithful pastors by their irregular proceedings. See Butler's Analogy, p. 232. Oct. Edit. or p. 158. 4to Edit. Our Lord himself has taken occasion to make the comparison between positive institutions and moral precepts; by delivering his authoritative determination in a proverbial manner of expression, has made it general; "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice."

operated so strongly in his favour, that he lived concealed at Lyons for the space of three years.

Among other scriptural discoveries, the evils of the popedom struck the mind of Waldo; and Pope Alexander III. having heard of his proceedings, anathematized the reformer and his adherents, and commanded the archbishop to proceed against them with the utmost rigour.

Waldo could no longer remain in Lyons. He escaped; his disciples followed him; and hence a dispersion took place, similar to that which arose in the primitive Church on occasion of the persecution of Stephen. The effects were also similar: the doctrine of Waldo was hence more widely disseminated through Europe. He himself retired into Dauphiny, where his tenets took a deep and lasting root. Some of his people did probably join themselves to the Vaudois of Piedmont, and the new translation of the Bible was, doubtless, a rich accession to the spiritual treasures of that people. Waldo, himself, however, seems never to have been among them. Persecuted from place to place, he retired into Picardy. Success still attended his labours; and the doctrines which he preached appear to have so harmonized with those of the Vaudois, that with reason they and his people were henceforward considered as the same.

To support and encourage the Church of Christ formed no part of the glory of the greatest and wisest princes of that age. The barbarous conduct of our Henry II. has been already noticed; and Philip Augustus, one of the most prudent and sagacious princes whom France ever saw, was no less enslaved by the “god of this world*.” He took up arms against the Waldenses of Picardy, pulled down three hundred houses of the gentlemen who supported their party, destroyed some walled towns, and drove the inhabitants into Flanders. Not content with this, he pursued them thither, and caused many of them to be burned.

From the account of a very authentic French historian †, it appears, that Waldo fled into Germany, and at last settled in Bohemia. There he ended his days in the year 1179, or before that time ‡.

Waldo dies
in Bohemia,

A. D. 1179.

* 2 Cor. iv. 4.

† Thuan. Hist. sui temp. 457.

‡ The account which Mosheim has given us of the Waldenses, is so

It is evident, from good records, that the churches of Dauphiny corresponded with those of Bohemia, and that these last were, on some occasions at least, supplied with pastors from Piedmont. These things show the mutual connection of the Waldensian Churches, and prove the superior antiquity of those of the Vallies, the severity of the persecution, and the important services of Peter Waldo. A very extraordinary personage ! resembling in many respects the immediate successors of the Apostles themselves ! But his piety, endowments, and labours, have met with no historian capable of doing them justice ; and, as in every light he had no reward upon earth, he appears to have been eminently one of those of whom the world was not worthy ; but he turned many to righteousness, and shall shine as the stars for ever and ever*. The word of God grew and multiplied in the places where he had planted, and even in still more distant regions. In Alsace and along the Rhine the Gospel was preached with a powerful effusion of the Holy Spirit ; persecutions ensued, and thirty-five citizens of Mentz were burned at one fire in the city of Bingen, and at Mentz eighteen. The bishop of Mentz was very active in these persecutions, and the bishop of Strasburg was not inferior to him in vindictive zeal ; for, through his means, eighty persons were burned at Strasburg. Every thing relating to the Waldenses resembled the scenes of the primitive Church. Numbers died praising God, and in confident assurance of a blessed resurrection ; whence the blood of the martyrs again became the seed of the Church ; and in Bulgaria, Croatia, Dalmatia, and Hungary, churches were

very different from mine, that it may seem proper that I should assign the reasons, why I presume to differ from so learned an historian in matters of fact. 1st. I have adduced ample testimonies, and the reader, who will consult Dr. Allix, may see more, to prove, that these persons existed before the time of Peter Waldo, and consequently, that he was not, as Mosheim asserts, the proper parent and founder of the sect. 2d. That his account of their insisting on the necessity of the poverty and manual labours of their pastors is a mistake, will appear from their own declarations in the next chapter. 3d. So far was Waldo from being the founder of the Churches of the Vallies, that it does not appear that he ever was in Piedmont at all. 4th. Mosheim asserts, that he assumed the pastoral function in 1180, but it is evident from Thuanus, that he died before that æra. On the whole, the information of Mosheim concerning this people seems very scanty, confused, and erroneous. See Mosheim, Vol. I. p. 615.

* Daniel xii. 3.

planted, which flourished in the thirteenth century, governed by Bartholomew, a native of Carcassone, a city not far distant from Toulouse, which might be called in those days the metropolis of the Waldenses, on account of the numbers who there professed evangelical truth*. In Bohemia and in the country of Passaw, it has been computed that there were eighty thousand in the former part of the fourteenth century. Almost throughout Europe Waldenses were to be found; and yet they were treated as the off-scouring of the earth, and as people against whom all the power and wisdom of the world were united. But "the witnesses continued to prophesy in sackcloth†," and souls were built up in the faith, the hope, and the charity of the Gospel; and here was the faith and patience of the Saints.

CHAP. II.

THE REAL CHARACTER OF THE WALDENSES.

BUT we are justly called on, in this place, to vindicate the claim which this people made to the honourable character of the Church of God. In times of very great decline, whoever is led by the Spirit of God to revive true religion, necessarily exposes himself to the invidious charges of arrogance, uncharitableness, and self-conceit. By condemning all others, he provokes the rest of the world to observe and investigate his faults. These disadvantages the Waldenses had in common with other reformers: they had also disadvantages peculiarly their own. Power, knowledge, and learning, were almost entirely in the hands of their adversaries: in them very particularly God Almighty chose the weak and foolish things of the world to confound the wise. As they were, for the most part, a plain and illiterate people, they furnished no learned divines, no profound reasoners, nor able historians. The vindication of their claims to the character of a true Church must therefore be drawn principally from the holiness of their lives and the patience of their sufferings. There are, however, besides these, certain

* Matthew Paris, in his Hist. of Hen. III. Ann. 1223. † Revelat. xi. 3.

documents respecting their principles, which will enable the candid and attentive reader to form a just estimate of these men.

Nothing can exceed the calumnies of their adversaries: in this respect they had the honour to bear the cross of the first Christians. Poor men of Lyons, and Dogs, were the usual terms of derision. In Provence, they were called cut-purses: in Italy, because they observed not the appointed festivals, and rested from their ordinary occupations only on Sundays, they were called Insabathas; that is, regardless of sabbaths. In Germany, they were called Gazares, a term expressive of every thing flagitiously wicked. In Flanders, they were denominated Turlupins, that is, inhabitants with wolves, because they were often obliged to dwell in woods and deserts. And because they denied the consecrated Host to be God, they were accused of Arianism, as if they had denied the divinity of Jesus Christ. Our old historian, Hoveden, calls them Arians*. It was not possible for these poor sufferers to speak a word in defence or explanation of their doctrines, but malice, which discolours every thing, was sure to misrepresent it. If they maintained the independency of the temporal powers on the ecclesiastical, a doctrine now believed almost universally in Europe, they were called Manichees, as if they favoured the notion of two principles. So I find Baronius calls them, observing that they were rather Manichees than Arians†. The old odious name of Gnostic also was revived, with every other term of ancient or modern opprobrium, which might infix a stigma on the character of the sufferers, and seem to justify the barbarity with which they were treated.

Matthew Paris himself, one of the most valuable of the monkish historians, calls them Ribalds, or dissolute men. They were termed, and as numbers believed not without justice, sorcerers, and even sodomites. It is surprising how the old calumnies, with which the pagans blackened the primitive Christians, were renewed, namely, that they met in the night, were guilty of incest, and the like. Reinerius, their adversary, as mentioned above, was not ashamed to repeat this absurd accusation. To which he

* Hoveden, p. 327.

† Baron. Cent. XII: Ann. 1176.

adds, that they allowed divorces at pleasure, in order that the sectarians might live together entirely, and exclude all others from their society; that they worshipped their pastors; and that they maintained as a principle, that no magistrate ought to condemn any person to death. But it were endless to recite calumnies of this kind: let us see how they cleared themselves by their own writings. An apology was still extant in the time of Perrin, which the Waldenses of Bohemia sent to Ladislaus, king of Hungary and Bohemia, by whom they were grievously persecuted. From this and some other of their writings, their conduct is defended.

In answer to the charge of lewdness, they strongly deny it, and gravely express their abhorrence of the sin. "This vice," say they, "consumes the estates of many, as it is said of the prodigal son, who wasted his substance in riotous living. Balaam made choice of this vice, to provoke the children of Israel to offend their God. Hence Samson lost his sight. Hence Solomon was perverted, and many have perished. The remedies for this sin, are fasting, prayer, and the keeping at a distance from temptation. Other vices may be subdued by fighting; in this we conquer by flight." Let men of this refined age, who are enslaved by uncleanness, learn some good rules from the Waldenses, whose simplicity was mixed with true wisdom. The charge of admitting divorces at pleasure they abhor, and quote the Scripture* against the practice: "Let not the wife depart from her husband, nor the husband put away his wife." They published also a book, describing the causes of their separation from the Roman Church. The separation was at length indeed, through the violence of their persecutors, made complete; but as I have elsewhere observed, the desire of separating from the Latin Church did not commence with them. This people were injuriously represented also as holding the community of goods, and denying the right of all private property. Their answer to the charge was very satisfactory. "Every one of us hath possessed his own at all times and in all places. In Dauphiny and other parts, when we were dispossessed of our substance, the suits for the recovery of

* 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

each estate were conducted by the particular proprietors*. The Waldenses of Provence do at this present time demand of the pope the restoration of the lands and estates annexed to his domain by confiscation; every particular person making oath of his parcel of goods and lands, which descended to him from time immemorial; for we never have had community of property in the sense objected to us by our adversaries."

Nothing is more common than to slander true Christians with aspersions which tend to deprive them of all respectability in society, and to represent them as quite unfit for the ordinary purposes of human life. We have just seen a foul attempt of this nature formed against the Waldenses. To the same purport they were charged with denying the lawfulness of oaths in all cases without exception. This point of their history has its difficulties: what they really held on the doctrine of oaths is not very apparent from the account which Usher gives us†. Most probably they condemned the multiplicity of oaths, with which the courts of law abounded. That they did not, however, maintain the absolute unlawfulness of oaths is certain, from the exposition of the third commandment in their "spiritual almanack;" in which are these words: "There are some oaths lawful, tending to the honour of God, and the edification of our neighbour, as appears from Heb. vi. 16. Men swear by a greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife." Other scriptures are alleged by them to the same purport. Men who held these things should be acquitted of the charge of universally denying the lawfulness of oaths. But it seems to have been one of the common artifices of the prince of darkness to calumniate the people of God in this manner. He knows, that if religious men be thought wholly unfitted for this world, because of certain absurd or ridiculous customs, the generality of mankind will pay no great regard to their instructions concerning the right way to the next. It is, therefore, of some consequence to clear up the character of true Christians in this respect.

* This appears by the legal process, existing in Perrin's time, which shows that Lewis XII. condemned the usurpers of the goods of the Waldenses to a restitution. This happened about the beginning of the sixteenth century.

† Usher de Christ. Ecc. success. & statu.

Another charge against them was, that they denied baptism to infants. In answer to this, in their spiritual almanack, they say, "neither the time nor the place is appointed for those who must be baptized. But we do bring our children to be baptized; which they ought to do, to whom they are nearest related; their parents, or those whom God hath inspired with such charity." If this be the case,—and the evidence of their own books appears to be unanswerable,—it seems improper to look on the Waldenses as averse to infant-baptism. Yet, that some of them were regarded as professed enemies to the baptism of infants, is affirmed on respectable authority*, and it possibly might be the case with a few of them. The greater part of them are, however, vindicated in this respect by an authority from which lies no appeal, their own authentic writings. However, having been for some hundreds of years constrained to suffer their children to be baptized by the Romish priests, they were under frequent temptations to defer it, on account of the superstitious inventions annexed to that holy ordinance in those times: and very frequently on account of the absence of their own pastors, whom they called Barbs, who were travelling abroad for the service of the Churches, they could not have baptism administered to their children by their ministry. The delay occasioned by these things exposed them to the reproach of their adversaries. And though many, who approved of them in all other respects, gave credit to the accusation, I cannot find any satisfactory proof, that they were, in judgment, antipædo-baptists strictly. And it is very probable that some of the supposed heretics, who have been mentioned above†, delayed the baptism of their children on the same account; because similar circumstances would naturally be attended with similar effects. On the whole, a few instances excepted, the existence of antipædo-baptism seems scarcely to have taken place in the Church of Christ, till a little after the beginning of the Reformation, when a sect arose, whom historians commonly call the anabaptists. I lay no great stress on this subject; for the Waldenses might have been a faithful, humble, and spiritual people, as I believe

* Cent. Magd. XII. 833.

† See p. 43 of this Vol.

they were, if they had differed from the general body of Christians on this article. But when I find persons accused as enemies to infant-baptism who were not so, it seems to be a part of historical veracity to represent things as they really were.

The charge of worshipping their Barbs is sufficiently confuted by their exposition of the first commandment in the book of their doctrine. Indeed Albert de Capitaneis, their grand enemy in the diocese of Turin, violently tortured them, in order to extort from them a confession of this idolatry, but to no purpose.

It was a gross calumny to censure them as inimical to the penal power of the magistrate, because they complained of the abuse of his power in condemning true Christians to death without a fair examination ; when, at the same time, in their own books, they asserted, that “ a malefactor ought not to be suffered to live*.”

No less unjust were the charges against them of seditiousness and undutifulness to the supreme power. For in the book of the causes of their separation from the Church of Rome, they said, that every one ought to be subject to those who are in authority, to obey and love them, to honour them with double honour, with subjection, allegiance, and promptitude, and the paying of tribute to whom tribute is due. The charges of sodomy, sorcery, and the like abominations, are sufficiently confuted by the authentic writings, holy lives, and patient sufferings of this people.

One charge more against them is, that they compelled their pastors to follow some trade. How satisfactory their answer ! “ We do not think it necessary that our pastors should work for bread. They might be better qualified to instruct us, if we could maintain them without their own labour ; but our poverty has no remedy.” So they speak in letters published in 1508†.

We have hitherto rather rescued their character from infamy, than delineated its real nature. They appear, on the whole, to have been most unjustly aspersed ; and the reader will be enabled to form some idea of their piety and probity, from the following testimonies of their enemies :

* In a book of the Waldenses, called “ The Light of the Treasure of Faith.”

† Usher de Christ. Eccl. succ. & statu.

A pontifical inquisitor* says, "heretics are known by their manners. In behaviour they are composed and modest, and no pride appears in their apparel." Seysillius says, it much strengthens the Waldenses, that, their heresy excepted, they generally live a purer life than other Christians. They never swear but by compulsion, and seldom take the name of God in vain: they fulfil their promises with good faith; and, living for the most part in poverty, they profess that they at once preserve the apostolical life and doctrine. Lielenstenius, a Dominican, speaking of the Waldenses of Bohemia, says, "I say that in morals and life they are good; true in words, and unanimous in brotherly love; but their faith is incorrigible and vile, as I have shown in my treatise."

These testimonies, for which I am obliged to the researches of archbishop Usher, seem to me to be important. The first, as far as it goes, is favourable; and the second and third are exceedingly decisive. Causes and effects are necessarily connected. How could the Romanist last quoted suppose, that the faith of men could be bad whose fruits were so excellent? Could he show such fruits in the Roman Church in general at that time?

We have now seen the fullest testimony to the holiness of the Waldenses; and we shall see shortly that the doctrines which they held were no other than those, which, under the Divine influence, we have all along observed to be the constant root of virtue in the world.

Reinerius, the cruel persecutor, owns that the Waldenses frequently read the Holy Scriptures, and in their preaching cited the words of Christ and his apostles concerning love, humility, and other virtues; insomuch that the women, who heard them, were enraptured with the sound. He further says, that they taught men to live by the words of the Gospel and the Apostles; that they led religious lives; that their manners were seasoned with grace, and their words prudent; that they freely discoursed of divine things, that they might be esteemed good men. He observes, likewise, that they taught their children and families the Epistles and Gospels. Claude, bishop of Turin, wrote a treatise against their doctrines,

* Usher de Christ. Eccl. succ. & statu.

in which he candidly owns that they themselves were blameless, without reproach among men, and that they observed the divine commands with all their might.

Jacob de Riberia says, that he had seen peasants among them who could recite the book of Job by heart; and several others, who could perfectly repeat the whole New Testament.

The bishop of Cavaillon once obliged a preaching monk to enter into conference with them, that they might be convinced of their errors, and the effusion of blood be prevented. This happened during a great per-
 Great Per-
 secution, secution, in 1540, in Merindol and Provence.

A.D. 1540. But the monk returned in confusion, owning that he had never known in his whole life so much of the Scriptures, as he had learned during those few days in which he had held conferences with the heretics. The bishop, however, sent among them a number of doctors, young men who had lately come from the Sorbonne, which was at that time the very centre of theological subtilty at Paris. One of them openly owned, that he had understood more of the doctrine of salvation from the answers of the little children in their catechism, than by all the disputations which he had ever heard. This is the testimony of Vesebecius in his oration concerning the Waldenses. The same author informs us further, that Lewis XII. importuned by the calumnies of informers, sent two respectable persons into Provence to make inquiries. They reported, that in visiting all their parishes and temples, they found no images or Roman ceremonies, but that they could not discover any marks of the crimes with which they were charged; that the sabbath was strictly observed; that children were baptized according to the rules of the primitive Church, and instructed in the articles of the Christian faith, and the commandments of God. Lewis having heard the report, declared with an oath, "they are better men than myself or my people." One of the confessors of the same king having, by his orders, visited the valley of Fraissiniere in Dauphiny, was so struck with the holy lives of the people there, that he declared in the hearing of several competent witnesses, that he wished he himself were as good a Christian as the worst inhabitant in that valley.

We must add here the testimony of that great historian Thuanus, an enemy indeed to the Waldenses, though a fair and candid one*. He is describing one of the vallies inhabited by this people in Dauphiny, which is called the stony valley. "Their clothing," he says, "is of the skins of sheep;—they have no linen.—They inhabit seven villages: their houses are constructed of flint stone, with a flat roof covered with mud, which being spoiled or loosened by rain, they smooth again with a roller. In these they live with their cattle, separated from them, however, by a fence; they have besides two caves set apart for particular purposes, in one of which they conceal their cattle, in the other themselves, when hunted by their enemies. They live on milk and venison, being by constant practice excellent marksmen. Poor as they are, they are content, and live separate from the rest of mankind. One thing is astonishing, that persons externally so savage and rude, should have so much moral cultivation. They can all read and write. They understand French, so far as is needful for the understanding of the Bible and the singing of Psalms. You can scarcely find a boy among them who cannot give you an intelligible account of the faith which they profess; in this, indeed, they resemble their brethren of the other vallies: they pay tribute with a good conscience, and the obligation of this duty is peculiarly noted in the confession of their faith. If, by reason of the civil wars, they are prevented from doing this, they carefully set apart the sum, and at the first opportunity pay it to the king's tax-gatherers."

Francis I. the successor of Lewis XII. received, on inquiry, the following information concerning the Waldenses of Merindol, and other neighbouring places; that they were a laborious people, who came from Piedmont to dwell in Provence, about two hundred years ago; that they had much improved the country by their industry; that their manners were most excellent; and that they were honest, liberal, hospitable, and humane; that they were distinct from others in this, that they could not bear the sound of blasphemy, or the naming of the devil, or any others, except on solemn occasions; and, that if ever

* Thuan. Hist. B. 27. p. 16.

they fell into company where blasphemy or lewdness formed the substance of the discourse, they instantly withdrew themselves.

Such are the testimonies to the character of this people from enemies!

That they are well spoken of by Protestants since the Reformation, might be expected; and I need not dwell largely upon evidences drawn from this source. Beza, Bullinger, and Luther, testify the excellence of the Waldenses. The last-mentioned Reformer deserves the more to be regarded, because he owns that he once was prejudiced against them. He understood by their confessions and writings that they had been, for ages, singularly serious and expert in the use of the Scriptures.—He rejoiced, and gave thanks to God, that he had enabled the reformed and the Waldenses to see and own each other as brethren*.

Æcolampadius and Martin Bucer also, in the year 1530, wrote an affectionate letter to the Waldenses of Provence.

After so many testimonies to the character of this people, the evidence of Vignaux, a Waldensian pastor in the vallies of Piedmont, who wrote a treatise on their life and manners, may deserve our attention. “We never mix ourselves,” says he, “with the church of Rome in marriage. Yet Roman-catholic lords and others prefer our people as servants, to those of their own religion, and come from far to seek nurses among us for their children.”

It is remarkable that Thomas Walden, who wrote against Wickliff, says, that the doctrine of Waldo was conveyed from France into England. It may not, perhaps, be thought improbable, that the English, being masters of Guienne for a long time, should have received some beams of divine truth from the followers of Waldo. By the general confession of the Romanists, indeed, the Protestants and the Waldenses were looked on as holding the same principles.

The churches of Piedmont, however, on account of their superior antiquity, were regarded as guides of the rest; insomuch, that when two pastors, who had been sent by them into Bohemia, acted with perfidy, and occa-

* Vesembecius.

sioned a grievous persecution, still the Bohemians ceased not to desire pastors from Piedmont; only they requested, that none but persons of tried characters might be sent to them for the future.

I can only give the general outlines: if the finer and more numerous lines of this scene could be circumstantially drawn, a spectacle more glorious could scarcely be exhibited to the reader. From the borders of Spain, throughout the south of France, for the most part, among and below the Alps, along the Rhine, on both sides of its course, and even to Bohemia, thousands of godly souls were seen patiently to bear persecution for the sake of Christ, against whom malice could say no evil, but what admits the most satisfactory refutation: men distinguished for every virtue, and only hated because of godliness itself. Persecutors with a sigh owned, that, because of their virtue, they were the most dangerous enemies of the Church. But of what Church? Of that, which in the thirteenth century and long before had evidenced itself to be Antichristian. Here were not an individual or two, like Bernard, but very many real Christians, who held the real doctrines of Scripture, and carefully abstained from all the idolatry of the times. How obdurate is the heart of man by nature! men could see and own the superior excellence of these persons, and yet could barbarously persecute them! What a blessed light is that of Scripture! By that the Waldenses saw the road to heaven, of which the wisest of their contemporaries were ignorant, who, though called Christians, made no use of the oracles of God! How marvellous are the ways of God! How faithful his promise in supporting and maintaining a Church, even in the darkest times! But her livery is often sackcloth, and her external bread is that of affliction, while she sojourns on earth. But let no factious partizan encourage himself in sedition by looking at the Waldenses. We have seen how obedient they were to established governments; and that separation from a Church, so corrupt as that of Rome, was with them only matter of necessity. The best and wisest in all ages have acted in the same manner, and have dreaded the evils of schism more than those of a defect in discipline. We

shall now see what the Waldenses were in point of doctrine and discipline. For their virtues had an evangelical principle, and it is only to be regretted that the accounts are so very scanty on a subject worthy the attention of all who desire to understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.

CHAP III.

THE DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINE OF THE WALDENSES.

THE leading principle of this Church, which God raised up in the dark ages to bear witness to his Gospel, is that in which all the Protestant Churches agreed, namely, "that we ought to believe that the Holy Scriptures alone contain all things necessary to our salvation, and that nothing ought to be received as an article of faith but what God hath revealed to us*." Wherever this principle is not only assented to in form, but also received with the heart, it expels superstition and idolatry. The worship of one God, through the one Mediator, and by the influence of one Holy Spirit, is practised sincerely. For the dreams of purgatory, the intercession of saints, the adoration of images, dependence on relics and austerities, cannot stand before the doctrine of Scripture. Salvation by grace, through faith in Christ alone, as it is the peculiar truth and glory of the Scriptures, so it is the boast and joy of the Christian, who knows himself to be that guilty, polluted creature which the same Scriptures describe. How abominable to such a one is the doctrine of indulgencies, and of commutation for offences, and the whole structure of the papal domination! The true love of God and of our neighbour, even the true holiness, which is the great end and aim of Christ's redemption, must be subverted by these human inventions. The Waldenses were faithful to the great fundamental principle of Protestantism. Enough appears on record to prove, that they were formed by the grace of God to show forth his praise in the world; and great as the resemblance appears between them and the reformed, if we had as many

* Vignaux in his memorials of the Waldenses. See this principle expressed in a similar manner in the sixth Article of the Church of England.

writings of the former, as we have of the latter, the resemblance in all probability would appear still more striking.

"They* affirm, that there is only one Mediator, and therefore that we must not invoke the Saints."

"That there is no purgatory; but that all those who are justified by Christ go into life eternal."

"They receive two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They affirm, that all masses are damnable, especially those which are repeated for the dead, and that therefore they ought to be abolished; to which they add the rejection of numberless ceremonies. They deny the supremacy of the pope, especially the power which he hath usurped over the civil government; and they admit no other degrees, except those of bishops, priests, and deacons. They condemn the popedom as the true Babylon, allow the marriage of the clergy, and define the true Church to be those who hear and understand the word of God."

Vignaux mentions old manuscripts extant among the Waldenses, containing catechisms and sermons, which demonstrate with what superior light they were favoured, in a time of immense darkness. A number of their old treatises evince, that for some hundreds of years the principles of the Gospel, which alone can produce such holiness of life as the Waldenses exhibited in their conduct, were professed, understood, and embraced by this chosen people, while Antichrist was in the very height of his power.

They appear to have had all the essentials of Church-discipline among them; and their circumstances of distress, of poverty, and of persecution, however disagreeable to flesh and blood, favoured that spirit of submission and subordination, which ever promotes a salutary exercise of discipline; through the want of which, among ourselves, Church-rules are too commonly treated as insignificant. A state of refinement, of wealth, of luxury, and of political speculation, was unknown to the Waldenses: how subversive such a state is of the most wholesome ecclesiastical authority, the experience of our own age demonstrates.

* Vignaux.

In a book concerning their pastors we have this account of their vocation :

“ All, who are to be ordained as pastors among us, while they are yet at home, entreat us to receive them into the ministry, and desire that we would pray to God, that they may be rendered capable of so great a charge. They are to learn by heart all the chapters of St. Matthew and St. John, all the canonical epistles, and a good part of the writings of Solomon, David, and the prophets. Afterwards, having exhibited proper testimonials of their learning and conversation, they are admitted as pastors by the imposition of hands. The junior pastors must do nothing without the license of their seniors ; nor are the seniors to undertake any thing without the approbation of their colleagues, that every thing may be done among us in order. We pastors meet together once every year, to settle our affairs in a general synod. Those whom we teach afford us food and raiment with good-will, and without compulsion. The money given us by the people is carried to the said general synod, is there received by the elders, and applied partly to the supply of travellers, and partly to the relief of the indigent. If a pastor among us shall fall into a gross sin, he is ejected from the community, and debarred from the function of preaching.”

Such was the manner of choosing the Barbs, and such was the plan of Church-government.

To transcribe their confessions of faith would be tedious ; let it suffice to mention the most interesting points. They unquestionably received the Apostles' Creed, and that commonly ascribed to Athanasius. They acknowledged the same canon of Scripture, which the Church of England does in her sixth Article ; and, what is very remarkable, they give the same account of the Apocryphal books, accompanied with the same remark of Jerom, which the reader will find in the same sixth Article. They say, “ these books teach us, that there is one God, Almighty, wise and good, who in his goodness made all things. He created Adam after his own image. But through the malice of the devil, and the disobedience of Adam, sin entered into the world, and we became sinners in and by Adam. That Christ is our life and truth, and

peace, and righteousness, our shepherd and advocate, our sacrifice and priest, who died for the salvation of all who should believe, and also rose again for our justification."

The confession of the Bohemian Waldenses, published in the former part of the sixteenth century, is very explicit on these articles. They say, that men ought to acknowledge themselves born in sin, and to be burdened with the weight of sin; that they ought to acknowledge, that for this depravity, and for the sins springing up from this root of bitterness, utter perdition deservedly hangs over their heads, and that all should own that they can no way justify themselves by any works or endeavours, nor have any thing to trust to but Christ alone. They hold, that by faith in Christ, men are, through mercy, freely justified, and attain salvation by Christ, without human help or merit. They hold, that all confidence is to be fixed in him alone, and all our care to be cast upon him; and, that for his sake only God is pacified, and adopts us to be his children. They teach also, that no man can have this faith by his own power, will or pleasure; that it is the gift of God, who, where it pleaseth him, worketh it in man by his Spirit*. They teach also the doctrine of good works as fruits and evidences of a lively faith, much in the same manner as the Church of England does in her twelfth Article, and more largely in her homilies†.

The Waldenses in general express their firm belief, that there is no other Mediator than Jesus Christ: they speak with great respect of the Virgin Mary, as holy, humble, and full of grace; at the same time that they totally discountenance that senseless and extravagant admiration, in which she had been held for ages. They assert, that all, who have been and shall be saved, have been elected of God before the foundation of the world: and that whosoever upholds free-will, absolutely denies predestination and the grace of God‡. I use their own term free-will, not that I think it strictly proper. But what they meant by an upholder of free-will, is not hard to be understood, namely, one who maintains that there are resources in the

* Morland, p. 48.

† Id. 49.

‡ Id. p. 40.

nature of man sufficient to enable him to live to God as he ought, without any need of the renewal of his nature by divine grace.

“We honour,” say they, “the secular powers with subjection, obedience, promptitude, and payment of tribute.” On this subject they are repeatedly explicit, and mention the example of our Lord, “who refused not to pay tribute, not taking upon himself any jurisdiction of temporal power.”

They give a practical view of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, perfectly agreeable to the faith of the orthodox in all ages. Let it suffice to mention what they say of the Holy Ghost. “We believe, that he is our Comforter, proceeding from the Father and from the Son ; by whose INSPIRATION we pray, being RENEWED by him WHO FORMETH all good works within us, and by him we have knowledge of all truth.” Of the nature and use of the sacraments, they speak the common language of the Protestant Churches. The difference, indeed, between real good men in all ages, even in point of sentiment, on fundamental questions, is much smaller than what many believe. Trifling differences have been exceedingly magnified, partly through ignorance, and partly through malevolence. Through the course of this history the uniformity of faith, of inward experience, and of external practice, has appeared in the different ages of the Church. For it is the SAME GOD WHO WORKETH ALL IN ALL in his real Saints.

It is remarkable that an ancient confession of faith, copied out of certain manuscripts bearing date 1120, that is forty years before Peter Waldo, contains the same articles in substance, and in many particulars in the same words, as those, an abridgment of which has been given, and which were approved of in the sixteenth century. The conclusion from this fact is, that though Waldo was a most considerable benefactor to the Waldensian Churches by his translation of the Scriptures, his other writings, his preaching, and his sufferings, he was not properly their founder. Their plan of doctrine and Church-establishment, particularly in Piedmont, was of prior date, nor can any other account of the existence and

light of a Church so pure and sound, in ages so remarkably corrupt, be given than this, that the labours of Claudius of Turin in the ninth century had, under God, produced these effects. Men, who spend, and are spent for the glory of God, and for the profit of souls, have no conception of the importance of their efforts. While the schemes and toils of an ambitious conqueror, or an intriguing politician, which, at the time, fill the world with admiration, often vanish like smoke, the humble and patient labours of a minister of Christ, though, during his own life, derided and despised by the great ones of the earth, remain in durable effects to succeeding generations, and emancipate thousands from the dominion of sin and Satan. God will work, AND WHO SHALL LET IT? In one article, indeed, these professors of pure religion seem to have carried their zeal beyond the bounds of Christian discretion. "We have," say they, "always accounted as unspeakable abominations before God, all those inventions of men, namely, the feasts and the vigils of the Saints." To these they add the idolatrous corruptions of the popedom. They either did not know, or did not consider, that the anniversaries of the martyrdoms of primitive Saints were of very high antiquity, and were observed in the purest times, even in the second century. As they were at that time observed, they seem not to have had any superstitious alloy, and might be productive of the best consequences, much less do they deserve the title of "unspeakable abominations." But the adoration and canonization of Saints, with other practices, which deserve the name of abominations, being incorporated with these festivals, in the twelfth and some preceding centuries, naturally account for the zealous and unreasonable indignation of these reformers.

The ancient catechism for the instruction of their youth, contains the same vital truths in substance, which form the catechisms of Protestant Churches. I shall mention two or three particulars, which are most strikingly peculiar.

"Q. Wherein consists your salvation?

Ans. In three substantial virtues, which do necessarily belong to salvation.

Q. How can you prove that?

Ans. The Apostle writes, 1 Cor. xiii. now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three.

Q. What is faith?

Ans. According to the Apostle, Heb. xi. 1, it is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Q. How many sorts of faith are there?

Ans. There are two sorts, a living and a dead faith.

Q. What is a living faith?

Ans. It is that which works by love.

Q. What is a dead faith?

Ans. According to St. James, that faith, which is without works, is dead. Again, faith is nothing without works. Or, a dead faith is to believe that there is a God, and to believe those things which relate to God, and not believe IN him."

This last clause seems happily descriptive of the point. To believe in Christ is by himself, in John vi. illustrated by coming to him or trusting in him, being an exercise of heart toward Christ, which always works by love. Whereas a bare unoperative assent to certain doctrinal truths implies no reception of Christ in the heart, though it is all that thousands look on as necessary to constitute a genuine believer. That the composers of this catechism had in view this important distinction between speculatively believing a person to exist, and cordially believing IN that person, appears from another question and answer.

"Q. Dost thou believe in the Holy Catholic Church?

Ans. No; for it is a creature; but I believe that there is one."

They then proceed to show that the real Church consists "of the elect of God from the beginning to the end of the world, by the grace of God, through the merit of Christ, gathered together by the Holy Spirit, and fore-ordained to eternal life."

The Waldensian Churches had also an exposition of the Apostles Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments. So remarkably has the Spirit of God, in all ages, led the real Church, in a similar manner, to provide for the instruction of her children, by

comments on the most necessary fundamentals ! The Protestant Churches, in their original construction, all followed the same plan. An excess of ceremonies, and a burdensome round of superstitions, filled all the dominions of the papacy, while here and there an inventive genius, like Peter Abelard, endeavoured to swell the minds of men by philosophical refinements. In the mean time the genuine Christians were feeding on the bread of life, which was supplied by the Divine Word, and was communicated through the medium of catechetical and expository tracts, adapted to the plainest understandings. At this day true Christians are employed in the same manner ; and a diligent observer may distinguish them from those of the superstitious or the self-sufficient cast. In our times, indeed, there does appear one remarkable difference of circumstances from the state of religion in the thirteenth century, namely, that the self-sufficient sceptical spirit predominates extremely above the superstitious.

I have examined the Waldensian expositions, which, together with the Scripture-proofs annexed to them, must at that day have formed a very salutary body of instruction. But the numerous modern treatises which are extant on the same subjects, render it superfluous for me to give them in detail. A few of the most striking thoughts shall be mentioned.

It deserves to be noticed, that in their exposition of the Apostles Creed, the Waldensian reformers give us the well-known text in 1 John, v. 7, as a proof of the doctrine of the Trinity. They were, it seems, perfectly satisfied of its authenticity, and most probably at that time had never heard of any suggestions to the contrary.

“The Son of God, by the commandment of God the Father, and by his own free-will, was lifted up upon the altar of the cross, and was crucified, and hath redeemed mankind with his own blood ; which work being accomplished, he arose from the dead the third day, having diffused through the world a light everlasting, like a new sun ; that is, the glory of the resurrection, and of a heavenly inheritance, which the Son of God hath promised to give to all those who serve him in faith.”

Hear, in a few instances, how, in common with all

evangelical expositors, they understand the spiritual meaning of the commandments. For "the first degree to salvation is the knowledge of sin; and therefore, acknowledging our fault, we approach with confidence to the throne of grace, and confess our sins."

"All that love the creature more than the Creator, observe not the first commandment. If a man shall say, I cannot tell whether I have a greater love to God, or to that which he forbids me to love, let him know, that what a man loves least, in a case of necessity, is that which he is most willing to lose, and that which he loves the most, he preserves. Men cast their merchandise into the sea, to preserve their lives; which shows that they love life more than property. By such rules thou mayest try, whether thou lovest God more than all persons and things besides, or, whether thou art an idolater."

On the second commandment they are soundly argumentative and judiciously exact, because of the abominations with which they were surrounded, and with which all Europe was infected, except themselves.

"In the third commandment we are forbidden to swear falsely, vainly, or by custom. An oath acknowledgeth that God knows the truth, and it confirmeth a thing that is doubtful: it is an act of divine service, and therefore they, who swear by the elements, do sin."

"Those who will observe the sabbath of Christians, that is, who will sanctify the day of the Lord, must be careful of four things: 1st. to cease from earthly and worldly labours; 2d. to abstain from sin; 3d. not to be slothful in regard of good works; and 4th. to do those things which are for the good of the soul." They support their assertion by the case of the sabbath-breaker in the book of Numbers, who was stoned to death.

In the rest of the commandments, they extend the meaning to the desires of the heart, and vindicate their interpretation by the well-known passages in our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. How could serious persons, who thus see the spirituality of the law, ever find rest to their consciences but in the blood of Christ? How common is it for self-righteous persons on the other hand to curtail the demands of the law, and make light of sin, that they may justify themselves!

On the Lord's Prayer, in a very sensible introduction, they observe, that "God, who seeth the secrets of our hearts, is more moved by a deep groan or sigh, with complaints and tears, that come from the heart, than by a thousand words." In opposition to the formal rounds of repetition at that time so fashionable, they say, "there is no man, who can keep his mind attentive to prayer a whole day or a whole night together, except God give the special assistance of his grace. God hath therefore appointed to his servants other exercises, sometimes in one way, sometimes in another, which are to be performed for the good of themselves or of their neighbours, with their hearts lifted up to God." "To pray much is to be fervent in prayer." "No prayer can be pleasing to God, which refers not some way or other to the Lord's Prayer. Every Christian ought to apply himself to understand and learn it."

There is among the records of this people a very ancient confession of sin, which was commonly used, and which shows that they taught every person to apply to himself that hideous picture of human depravity which St. Paul delineates*, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." If no more could be said for this people, than that they hated the gross abominations of popery, and condemned the vices of the generality of mankind, they might have been ostentatious Pharisees, or self-sufficient Socinians. But though, no doubt, there were unsound professors among them, as among all other bodies of Christians, yet, in their community, there were a number of real Christians, who knew how to direct the edge of their severity against the "sins that dwelled in them," and who, being truly humbled under a piercing sight of native depravity, betook themselves wholly to the grace of God in Christ for salvation. Hear how they speak: "Excuse myself I cannot; for thou, O Lord, hast showed me both what is good and evil. I have understood thy power; I have not been ignorant of thy wisdom; I have known thy justice; and have tasted of thy goodness. Yet all the evil which I do proceeds from my own depravity. I

* Rom. iii. 10—20.

have committed many evils from the beginning of my life; covetousness is rooted in my heart; I love riches, I seek after applause, and bear little love to those who have obliged me by their kindness. If thou do not pardon me, my soul must go down to perdition. Anger likewise reigns in my heart, and envy gnaws me; for I am naturally without charity. I am slow to do good, but industrious to do evil. I have blinded myself, and have had many evil thoughts against thee. I have cast mine eyes on vain delights, and have seldom lifted them up to thy face. I have lent an ear to empty sounds, and to many evil speakings; but to hear and understand thy laws hath been grievous and irksome to me. I have taken more pleasure in the noisome sink of sin, than in divine sweetness; I have even worshipped sin; I have endeavoured to conceal my own guilt, and to lay it upon another. My mind and body are wounded; my heart hath been delighted with evil things; with many foolish and unprofitable objects. I have turned aside into bye-paths, and, by my levity, have given an ill example to others. I have slandered my neighbour, and have loved him only because of my temporal interest."

There is not, in any age, a truly humble and serious Christian, who will not acknowledge himself guilty in all these respects before God, even though his conduct has, comparatively speaking, been blameless before men. It is the want of self-knowledge which keeps men ignorant of their ill desert before God; and, in truth, nothing is so much unknown to men in general as the propensity of their own hearts. This knowledge, however, was found among the Waldenses; and hence they were a humble people, prepared to receive the Gospel of Christ from the heart, to walk in his steps, to carry his cross, and to fear sin above all other evils.

Some ancient inquisitorial memoirs, describing the manners and customs of this people, speak to this effect: "kneeling on their knees, they continue in prayers with silence, so long as a man may say thirty or forty Paternosters. This they do daily with great reverence, when they have no strangers with them, both before dinner and after; likewise before supper and after, and when they

retire to rest, and in the morning. Before they go to meat, the elder among them says, God, who blessed the five barley loaves and two fishes before his disciples in the wilderness, bless this table and that which is set upon it, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And after meat he says, The God which has given us bodily food, grant us his spiritual life, and may God be with us, and we always with him. After their meals they teach and exhort one another."

Reinerius, their adversary, declares, "that a certain Waldensian heretic, with a view of turning a person from the Catholic faith, swam over a river in the night and in the winter, to come to him and teach him the novel doctrines."

Hear what a character an ancient inquisitor gives of this people: "The heretics are known by their manners and words; for they are orderly and modest in their manners and behaviour. They avoid all appearance of pride in their dress, they neither wear rich clothes, nor are they too mean and ragged in their attire. They avoid commerce, that they may be free from falsehood and deceit: they live by manual industry, as day-labourers or mechanics; and their preachers are weavers and taylor. They seek not to amass wealth, but are content with the necessities of life. They are chaste, temperate, and sober; they abstain from anger. They hypocritically go to the Church, confess, communicate, and hear sermons, to catch the preacher in his words. Their women are modest, avoid slander, foolish jesting, and levity of words, especially falsehood and oaths*."

Their directions to pastors in visiting the sick are full of evangelical simplicity. The afflicted person is exhorted to look to Christ as the great pattern of patient sufferers, "who is the true Son of God, and yet hath been more afflicted than we all, and more tormented than any other.—Let the sick man consider with himself, that he is grievously afflicted as his Saviour was, when he suffered for us; for which thanks should be returned to God, because it hath pleased him to give this good Saviour to death for us, and at the same time mercy should be implored at his hands in the name of Jesus.

* Allix, p. 235.

And we Christians ought to have a perfect confidence and assurance, that our Father will forgive us for his goodness sake. Let the sick person commit himself wholly to the Lord. Let him do to his neighbour, as he would have his neighbour do to him, making such arrangements among his relations, that he may leave them in peace, and that there may be no suits or contentions after his death. Let him hope for salvation in Jesus Christ, and not in any other, or by any other thing, acknowledging himself a miserable sinner, that he may ask mercy of God, finding himself in such a manner culpable, that of himself he deserveth eternal death. If the pastor find the sick person alarmed and terrified with a sense of the divine displeasure against sinners, let him remind the distressed soul of those comfortable promises which our Saviour hath made to all those who come to him, and who from the bottom of their heart call upon him; and how God the Father hath promised forgiveness, whensoever we shall ask it in the name of his Son. These are the things in which the true preacher of the Word ought faithfully to employ himself, that he may conduct the party visited to his Saviour."

"And whereas, in former times, it hath been the custom to cause the disconsolate widow to spend much money on singers and ringers, and on persons who eat and drink, while she weeps and fasts, wronging her fatherless children; it is our duty, from motives of compassion, to the end that one loss be not added to another, to aid them with our counsel and our goods, according to the ability which God hath bestowed on us, taking care that the children be well instructed, that they may labour to maintain themselves, as God hath ordained, and live like Christians."

The directions which they gave to new converts, were, to study the epistolary instructions of St. Paul, that they might know how to walk in such a manner as not to give occasion of falling to their neighbours, and that they might not make the house of the Lord a den of thieves.

They were zealous in directing the education of children. "Despair not," say they, "of thy child, when he is unwilling to receive correction, or if he prove not

speedily good ; for the labourer gathereth not the fruits of the earth, as soon as the seed is sown, but he waits till the due season. A man ought to have a careful eye over his daughters. Keep them within, and see they wander not. For Dinah the daughter of Jacob was corrupted by being seen of strangers."

In ecclesiastical correction, they were directed by our Lord's rule, in first reproving a brother in private ; secondly, in the presence of two or three brethren ; and last of all, and not till other methods failed, in proceeding to excommunication. Private correction, they observe, is sufficient for faults not made known to many ; but in the case of open sins, they followed the apostolical rule, *Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others may fear. "Marriages are to be made according to the degrees of kindred permitted by God. The pope's dispensations are of no value, nor deserve the least regard. The band of holy matrimony must not be made without the consent of the parents of both parties ; for children belong to their parents."

Against the disorders of taverns, and the mischiefs of dancing, they are exceedingly severe. Remark one sentence ; " They who deck and adorn their daughters, are like those who put dry wood to the fire, to the end that it may burn the better. A tavern is the fountain of sin, and the school of Satan." For conversing with those, that are without, they give rules full of Christian simplicity ; and they direct their people also in Christian morals after a style and manner much superior to the spirit and taste of the thirteenth century †.

It may be proper to observe here, that Sir Samuel Morland, in his history of the evangelical Churches of the vallies of Piedmont, bears the strongest testimony to the truth of Perrin's narrative. He gives us the attestation of Tronchin, the chief minister of Geneva, which attestation, he tells us, is, together with other original papers, in the public library of the University of Cambridge. The substance of the attestation itself is, that Tronchin declares that Perrin, coming to Geneva to print his history, communicated to him his work, and divers

* 1 Tim. v. 20.

† Morland, p. 86.

original manuscripts, from which he (Perrin) had extracted the ancient doctrine and discipline of the Waldenses, which manuscripts Tronchin then saw and perused. Tronchin's testimony is dated in 1656. We have here the united testimony of Perrin, Tronchin, and Morland, to the authenticity of the history before us. And it appears that the same Tronchin, at the distance of thirty-eight years, corresponded both with Perrin and Morland. There is also a book concerning Antichrist in an old manuscript, which contains many sermons of the pastors; it is dated 1120, and therefore was written before the time of Waldo. The existence, therefore, of these Churches is still further proved to have taken place before the days of that reformer. The treatise concerning Antichrist was preserved by the Waldenses of the Alps; and a brief summary of it is as follows: "He is called Antichrist, because, being covered and adorned under the colour of Christ and his Church, he opposes the salvation purchased by Christ, of which the faithful are partakers by faith, hope, and charity. He contradicts the truth by the wisdom of the world, and by counterfeit holiness. To make up a complete system of religious hypocrisy, all these things must concur; there must be worldly-wise men, there must be religious orders, pharisees, ministers, doctors, the secular power, and lovers of this world. Antichrist, indeed, was conceived in the Apostles times, but he was in his infancy, unformed and imperfect. He was therefore the more easily known and ejected, being rude, raw, and wanting utterance. He had then no skill in making decretals, he wanted hypocritical ministers, and the show of religious orders. He had none of those riches, by which he might allure ministers to his service, and multiply his adherents: he wanted also the secular power, and could not compel men to serve him. But he grew to a full age, when the lovers of the world, both in Church and State, did multiply and get all the power into their hands: Christ had never any enemy like to this, so able to pervert the way of truth into falsehood, insomuch that the Church with her true children is trodden under foot. He robs Christ of his merits, of justification, regeneration, sanctification, and spiritual nourishment, and ascribes the same to his own authority,

to a form of words, to his own works, to saints, and to the fire of purgatory. Yet he has some decent qualities, which throw a veil over his enormities; such as an external profession of Christianity, tradition, and catalogues of episcopal succession, lying wonders, external sanctity, and certain sayings of Christ himself, the administration of the sacraments, verbal preaching against vices, and the virtuous lives of some who really live to God in Babylon, whom, however, Antichrist, so far as in him lies, prevents from placing all their hope in Christ alone. These things are a cloak, with which Antichrist hides his wickedness, that he may not be rejected as a pagan. Knowing these things, we depart from Antichrist, according to express Scriptural directions. We unite ourselves to the truth of Christ and his spouse, how small soever she appear. We describe the causes of our separation* from Antichrist, that if the Lord be pleased to impart the knowledge of the same truth to others, those who receive it, together with us, may love it. But if they be not sufficiently enlightened, they may receive help by our ministry, and be washed by the Spirit. If any one have received more abundantly than we ourselves, we desire the more humbly to be taught, and to amend our defects. A various and endless idolatry marks the genius of Antichrist, and he teaches men by that to seek for grace, which is essentially in God alone, exists meritoriously in Christ, and is communicated by faith alone through the Holy Spirit."

* Hence it appears, that, in 1120, there were a body of the Waldenses, who had perfectly separated from the Roman Church. Yet, it is evident from Bernard's account, that those of whom he had some knowledge, were not separatists. This may be one instance of their differences among themselves, of which Evervinus speaks. And it is very conceivable, that men equally sincere, might not be, for a time, unanimous in this point. The dread of schism on the one hand, and of idolatrous contagion on the other, would afford no contemptible argument on both sides of the question. The Albigenses, however, a branch of the Waldenses, in the year 1200, were so exceedingly numerous, that they then formed a distinct Church, and were openly separated from the whole Romish system. In truth, though it seems to have been the fault of some Protestant historians to give too early a date to the reign of Antichrist, and, on that account, to condemn unjustly several Romish pastors, whom I have attempted to vindicate, yet the man of sin doubtless did appear, at length, in all that enormity which the most vehement of the Protestant writers have described. Therefore it became absolutely necessary for real Christians to depart from Babylon. The several bodies of the Waldenses did so, though, I think, successively and gradually.—They are properly the first of the Protestant Churches.

They then proceed to confute distinctly the various abominations of popery, on which points it is, at this day, unnecessary to enlarge. Suffice it to say, that to see and argue as they did in that dark age, required a wonderful light, and strength of judgment. It is more to my purpose to mention some testimonies of the offices of Christ, which are interwoven in their arguments. "He is our advocate : he forgives sins. He presents himself in some measure to us, before we bestir ourselves. He knocks, that we may open to him : and, to obstruct all occasions of idolatry, he sits at the right hand of the Father in Heaven, and desires that every faithful soul should have recourse to his Redeemer alone. For all the care of the faithful should be directed toward Christ, imitating him that is above. He is the gate : whosoever entereth by him shall be saved. He alone hath the prerogative to obtain whatever he requests in behalf of mankind, whom he hath reconciled by his death. To what purpose should we address ourselves to any other Saint as mediator, seeing he himself is far more charitable and far more ready to succour us than any of them?"

There is also a short treatise on tribulation, a subject highly needful to be studied by all Christians, by those more particularly, who, like the Waldenses, live in the flames of persecution.

The Noble Lesson, written in the year 1100, has already, in part, been given to the reader*, and it closes the account of Waldensian monuments, collected by Perry of Lyons.

Some of the thoughts, which I have transcribed from this author, on account of their extreme simplicity, may appear almost childish, to persons whose taste has been formed purely by modern models and maxims ; and it must be confessed that we discover no person of superior capacity or uncommon genius among this people. Their means of knowledge were ordinary, their situation confined, and their circumstances perhaps universally poor. Even so FATHER, FOR SO IT SEEMED GOOD IN THY SIGHT†. The excellency of the power was therefore of God and not of man. How happened it, that they should

* See page 50 of this Vol.

† Luke x. 21.

possess so sound a portion of evangelical truth, so ably and judiciously confute established errors, so boldly maintain the truth as it is in Jesus, so patiently suffer for it, live so singularly distinct from the world, and so nobly superior to all around them ; while princes, dignitaries, universities, and all that was looked on as great, splendid, and wise among men, wandered in miserable darkness? It was of the Lord, who is wonderful in council and excellent in work ; and his preservation of a goodly seed in the earth, in such circumstances, is a pledge that he never will forsake his Church, and that the gates of hell shall never prevail against it.

We have seen the most satisfactory proofs of the genuine apostolical doctrine, connected with holy practice by the influence of the Holy Spirit, as subsisting among this people. At the Reformation, some fundamental doctrines, particularly that of original sin, and of justification by faith in Christ, were indeed more distinctly and explicitly unfolded. But every candid and intelligent reader has seen that these, with all other fundamental truths, were understood and confessed by the Waldenses. The principal defect of these records is, that invectives against Antichrist and its abominations make up too great a proportion of their catechetical instructions ; and the general vital truths of the Gospel are not so much enlarged on as the reader, who seeks edification, would wish. How far this defect might be less obvious, or even disappear, could we see the many sermons of their pastors, I know not. But these Churches were in perpetual trouble and danger ; and their distressed circumstances form, in some measure, an apology for the imperfection of their writings.

CHAP. IV.

THE PERSECUTIONS OF THE WALDENSES.

THIS is the only subject relating to the Waldenses, which has not passed under our review. Their external history is, indeed, little else than a series of persecution. And I regret, that while we have some large and distinct details of the cruelties of their persecutors, we have very scanty accounts of the spirit with which they suffered ; and still

less of the internal exercises of holiness, which are known only to the people of God. But this is not the first occasion which we have had to lament, concerning the manner in which Church-history has been transmitted to us.

In 1162, two years after Waldo had begun to preach the Gospel in Lyons, Lewis VII. of France, and Henry II.

Remarkable
humiliation
of our Henry
II. and of
Lewis VII.
of France,

A. D. 1162.

of England, on foot, holding the bridle of the horse of Pope Alexander VII. walking one on one side of him, the other on the other, conducted him to his habitation ; exhibiting, says Baronius*, a spectacle most grateful to God, to angels, and to men ! The princes of the earth, as well as the meanest persons, were now enslaved to the popedom, and were easily led to persecute the children of God with the most savage barbarity. We are astonished in reading the details of persecution. That which raged against the Waldenses in the former part of the thirteenth century, was indeed an assemblage of every thing cruel, perfidious, indecent, and detestable. But we are not to imagine, that contemporaries beheld such scenes with the same horror with which we do : the “ god of this world,” with consummate dexterity, infatuates his slaves by a successive variety of wickedness adapted to circumstances. The scenes of villany, meanness, indecency, hypocrisy, and barbarity, which, for several years, have been carrying on in France, under the mask of philosophy, liberty, and rationality, have found, in our own country, many defenders, or at least apologists. The reason is, that irreligious scepticism or atheistic profaneness is the darling of these times, as superstition was that of the thirteenth century. And if men will not learn the all-important lesson, to obey the divine oracles, there seems no end of the deceits by which the prince of darkness will impose on mankind.

In 1176 some of the Waldenses, called heretics, being examined by the bishops, were convicted of heresy. They

Waldensians
accused of
heresy,

A. D. 1176.

were said to receive only the New Testament, and to reject the Old, except in the testimonies quoted by our Lord and the Apostles†. This charge is confuted by the whole tenour

* Baronius Annals, Cent. XII.

† Baron. Cent. XII.

of their authentic writings, in which they quote the Old Testament authority as divine, without reserve or hesitation. Being interrogated concerning their faith, we are told that they said, "we are not bound to answer." Other accusations against them were as follow, namely, that they asserted the truth of the Manichean doctrine of two independent principles, that they denied the utility of infant-baptism, that the Lord's body was made by the consecration of an unworthy priest, that unfaithful ministers had any right to the exercise of ecclesiastical power, or to titles and first-fruits, or that the faithful ought to attend their pastoral services, or that auricular confession was necessary, or that oaths were in any case lawful. The reader, who has attentively considered the foregoing accounts of the Waldenses, will know how to separate the falsehood from the truth contained in these charges. "All these things," says Baronius, "the wretched men asserted that they learned from the Gospels and Epistles, and that they would receive nothing, except what they found expressly contained there; thus rejecting the interpretation of the doctors, though they themselves were perfectly illiterate. "They were confuted," he adds, "at a conference before the bishop of Albi, from the New Testament, which alone they admitted; and they professed the Catholic faith, but would not swear, and were therefore condemned."

From this account, however imperfect, and in several instances palpably injurious, some further light may be collected of the state of the Waldenses at that time.

In 1178, the same Lewis and Henry, who had sixteen years before, in so unkingly a manner, given their "power and strength to the beast*," hearing that the Albigenses grew in numbers, determined to attack them by the sword, but afterwards thought it more prudent to employ preachers †. They sent to them several

Henry II. and Lewis VII. endeavour to bring back the Albigenses to the Papal Church, A. D. 1178.

* Rev. xvii. 13.

† Baron. Cent. XII.

It is evident, that the term Albigenses, or rather Albienses, employed by our author, was taken from the town of Albi, where the Waldenses flourished. And, indeed, through the dominions of Raymond, earl of Toulouse, and through the south of France, including the territories of

bishops and ecclesiastics; and they employed Raymond of Toulouse and other noblemen to expel the refractory. The Commissioners arriving at Toulouse, exacted, by an oath, of the Catholics there, that they should give information of the heretics whom they knew. Great numbers were hence discovered. Among these was a rich old man called Peter Moranus, who had pretended to be John the Evangelist*. This person, denying the bread to be the body of Christ, was condemned: his goods were confiscated: his castles, the conventicles of heretics, were thrown down. Peter abjured his heresy, and was brought naked and barefoot into the Church before all the people; the bishop of Toulouse and a certain abbot beating him on each side from the entrance of the building to the steps of the altar, where the cardinal legate celebrated mass. There, being reconciled to the Church, he again abjured his heresy, anathematized heretics, and submitted to another penance, which was this, namely, after forty days to leave his country, to serve the poor at Jerusalem three years; and, during the forty days, each Sunday to go round the Churches of Toulouse naked and barefoot, disciplined by rods, and to make various restitutions. It was ordered, however, that if he should return after three years from Jerusalem, then the rest of his property, till that time held in sequestration, should be restored to him. Many others abjured their heresies; but some refusing to take the oaths of subjection were excommunicated, with candles publicly lighted; and princes were ordered to expel them from their dominions. Roger, prince of the Albiensian diocese, was excommunicated.

The account of our English historian Hoveden† is similar to this of Baronius. It is remarkable, that the former calls the doctrine of the Albigenses the Arian heresy. But Arian or Manichee, or any other term of reproach, sufficiently answers the design of determined persecutors. It seems proper to give the account of the

Avignon, their doctrines, at that time, spread with vast rapidity. All these were called, in general, Albigenses, and, in doctrine and manners, were not at all distinct from the Waldenses.

* It should be recollected, that this is the account given by Baronius, a very determined enemy of the Waldenses. † P. 327.

barbarous treatment of the rich old gentleman of Toulouse, who, though he recanted, was punished, because it confirms the truth of Perrin's narrative of the like persecutions, and demonstrates, from the testimony even of Roman writers, that the horrors of papal tyranny have not been misrepresented in general by protestant authors. And, on this occasion, I cannot but disapprove of the rashness or the prejudices of an able historian, who has already fallen under our notice*. He says, that the Albigenses, being examined, denied the Manichean doctrine of the two principles, though charged on that account with falsehood by their enemies: and this author believes these same enemies, who gave no proof of sincerity, that we know of, and accuses the Albigenses of dissimulation, though such numbers of them were suffering continually for their principles. The man, who undertakes to be an historian, ought to be acquainted with the writings and evidences which are produced on both sides of a controverted subject, so far as materials can be procured. If the author before us had read with the least attention the Waldensian records, he would never have asserted, that the Waldenses were legitimate descendants of the sect of Manes.

The subjects of Raymond, earl of Toulouse, and of some other great personages in his neighbourhood, so generally professed the Waldensian doctrines, that they became the peculiar object of papal vengeance. The inhabitants of Toulouse, Carcassone, Beziers, Narbonne, Avignon, and many other cities, who were commonly called the Albigenses, were exposed to a persecution as cruel and atrocious as any recorded in history. Reinerius, indeed, owns that the Waldenses were the most formidable enemies of the Church of Rome, "because," saith he, "they have a great appearance of godliness; because they live righteously before men, believe rightly of God in all things, and hold all the Articles of the Creed; yet, they hate and revile the Church of Rome; and, in their accusations, they are easily believed by the people."

It was reserved to Innocent the third, than whom no

* Berington's Hist. of Henry II. p. 305.

The Inquisition instituted by pope Innocent III.
 pope ever possessed more ambition, to institute the Inquisition*; and the Waldenses were the first objects of its cruelty. He authorized certain monks to frame the process of that court, and to deliver the supposed heretics to the secular power.

A.D. 1206. The beginning of the thirteenth century saw thousands of persons hanged or burned by these diabolical devices, whose sole crime was, that they trusted only in Jesus Christ for salvation, and renounced all the vain hopes of self-righteous idolatry and superstition. Whoever has attended closely to the subjects of the two Epistles to the Colossians and the Galatians, and has penetrated the meaning of the Apostle, sees the great duty of HOLDING THE HEAD, and of resting for justification by faith on Jesus Christ alone, inculcated throughout them as the predominant precept of Christianity, in opposition to the rudiments of the world, to philosophy and vain deceit, to will-worship, to all dependence for our happiness on human works and devices of whatever kind. Such a person sees what is genuine protestantism, as contrasted to genuine popery; and, of course, he is convinced, that the difference is not merely verbal or frivolous, but that there is a perfect opposition in the two plans; and such as admits of no coalition or union; and that therefore the true way of withstanding the devices of Satan, is to be faithful to the great doctrine of justification, "only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith; and not by our own works or deservings †." Hence the very foundation of false religion is overthrown; hence troubled consciences obtain solid peace: and faith, working by love, leads men into the very spirit of Christianity, while it comforts their hearts, and stablishes them in every good work.

Schemes of religion so extremely opposite, being ardently pursued by both parties, could not fail to produce a violent rupture. In fact, the Church of Christ and the world were seen engaged in contest. Innocent, however, first tried the methods of argument and persuasion. He sent bishops and monks, who preached in those places where the Waldensian doctrine flourished. But their

* Some chronologists place the commencement of the Inquisition in 1204.

† Eleventh Article of Religion.

success was very inconsiderable. In the neighbourhood of Narbonne two monks were employed, Peter de Chateauneuf, and Dominic*. The former of these was certainly murdered; and, it seems probable, by Raymond, count of Toulouse, because he had refused to remove the excommunication which he had denounced against that prince. Raymond himself strongly protected his Waldensian subjects, though there seems no evidence that he either understood or felt the vital influence of the protestant doctrines. But he was provoked at the imperious and turbulent measures of the monk, and saw the extreme injustice of the papal domination. He was also a witness of the purity of life and manners of his own subjects, and heard with indignation the calumnies with which they were aspersed by their adversaries, who proclaimed to all the world their own hypocrisy, avarice, and ambition. Incensed at these proceedings, Raymond seems to have taken a very unjustifiable method of extricating himself from the distresses to which the papal tyranny exposed him. But the event was disastrous; Innocent obtained what he wished, namely, a decent pretence for his horrible and most iniquitous persecution; and thousands of godly souls were unrighteously calumniated as accessory to the crime.

Murder of
Peter de
Chateau-
neuf.

I need not dwell on the insidious customs of the Inquisition; they are but too well known. From the year 1206, when it was first established, to the year 1228, the havoc made among helpless Christians was so great, that certain French bishops, in the last-mentioned year, desired the monks of the Inquisition to defer a little their work of imprisonment, till the pope was advertised of the great numbers apprehended; numbers so great, that it was impossible to defray the charge of their subsistence, and even to provide stone and mortar to build prisons for them. Yet so true is it, that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church, that in the year 1530 there were in Europe

There were
said to be
800,000
Waldenses
in Europe,
A.D. 1530.

* This is the famous founder of the Dominicans, of whom I shall speak more distinctly in a separate article, and show how far the censures of Perrin concerning him, as author of the Inquisition, are founded in fact.

above eight hundred thousand who professed the religion of the Waldenses.

When the Albigenses saw that the design of the pope was to gain the reputation of having used gentle and reasonable methods of persuasion, they agreed among themselves, to undertake the open defence of their principles. They therefore gave the bishops to understand, that their pastors, or some of them in the name of the rest, were ready to prove their religion to be truly scriptural, in an open conference, provided the conference might be conducted with propriety. They explained their ideas of propriety, by desiring that there might be moderators on both sides, who should be vested with full authority to prevent all tumult and violence ; that the conference should be held in some place to which all parties concerned might have free and safe access ; and, moreover, that some one subject should be chosen, with the common consent of the disputants, which should be steadily prosecuted, till it was fully discussed and determined ; and that he, who could not maintain it by the word of God, the only decisive rule of Christians, should own himself to be confuted.

All this was something more than specious : it was perfectly equitable and unexceptionably judicious : so much so, that the bishops and monks could not with decency refuse to accept the terms. The place of conference agreed upon was Montreal near Carcassone, in the year 1206. The umpires on the one side were the bishops of Ville-neuse and Auxerre ; on the other, R. de Bot, and Anthony Riviere.

A conference
between the
Papists and
the Albi-
genses at
Montreal,

A. D. 1206.

Several pastors were deputed to manage the debate for the Albigenses, of whom Arnold Hot was the principal. He arrived first at the time and place appointed. A bishop named Eusus, came afterwards on the side of the papacy, accompanied by the monk Dominic, two of the pope's legates, and several other priests and monks. The points undertaken to be proved by Arnold, were, that the mass and transubstantiation were idolatrous and unscriptural ; that the Church of Rome was not the spouse of Christ, and that its polity was bad and unholy. Arnold sent

these propositions to the bishop, who required fifteen days to answer him, which was granted. At the day appointed, the bishop appeared, bringing with him a large manuscript, which was read in the conference. Arnold desired that he might be allowed to reply by word of mouth, only entreating their patience, if he took a considerable time in answering so prolix a writing. Fair promises of a patient hearing were granted him. He discoursed for the space of four days with great fluency and readiness, and with such order, perspicuity, and strength of argument, that a powerful impression was made on the audience.

At length, Arnold desired that the bishops and monks would undertake to vindicate the mass and transubstantiation by the word of God. What they said on the occasion we are not told; but the cause of the abrupt conclusion of the conference, a matter of fact allowed on all sides, showed which party had the advantage in argument. While the two legates were disputing with Arnold at Montreal, and at the same time several other conferences were held in different places, the bishop of Ville-neuse, the umpire of the papal party, declared, that nothing could be determined, because of the coming of the crusaders. What he asserted was too true; the papal armies advanced, and, by fire and fagot, soon decided all controversies. If the conferences had been continued, an historian of the real Church might have had much to relate. As the matter stands, he must withdraw: it is the business of the secular historian to relate the military achievements: some circumstances, however, which tend to illustrate the merit and conduct of the Church of Christ, must be the objects of our attention.

Arnold and his assistants were, doubtless, of the number of those, who "did truth, and therefore came to the light, that their deeds might be made manifest, that they were wrought in God." And their adversaries were of those who "hated the light, and would not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reprov'd*:" Amidst the darkness and uncertainty in which, independently of revelation, every fundamental truth of salvation must be

* John iii.

involved in a world like this, and among creatures so depraved as mankind, a readiness to abide by the decisions of the divine oracles, or an unwillingness to stand the test of Scripture, demonstrates who are right and who are wrong. In all ages this has appeared to be the case: but we seldom meet with so striking an instance as this which we have reviewed. "In the sacrifice of the mass, it was commonly said, that the priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt." This the Church of England * calls a blasphemous fable and a dangerous deceit," asserting that "there is none other satisfaction for sin, but the offering of Christ once made for all the sins of the whole world." This was one question in the controversy between the two parties, for the decision of which the Scriptures were surely very competent. The recourse, which the popish party had to arms, in the room of sober argumentation, what was it but to pour contempt on the word of God itself, and to confess that its light was intolerably offensive to them? The approach of the crusaders, who, in the manner related, put an end to the conference, was not accidental; for Innocent, who never intended to decide the controversy by argument, on occasion of the unhappy murder of the monk before mentioned, had dispatched preachers throughout Europe, to collect all who were willing to revenge the innocent blood of Peter of Chateauneuf; promising Paradise to those who should bear arms for forty days, and bestowing on them the same indulgences as he did on those who undertook to conquer the Holy Land. "We moreover promise," says he, in his bull, "to all those who shall take up arms to revenge the said murder, the pardon and remission of their sins. And since we are not to keep faith with those, who do not keep it with God, we would have all to understand, that every person, who is bound to the said earl Raymond by oath of allegiance, or by any other way, is absolved by apostolical authority from such obligations; and it is lawful for any Roman Catholic to persecute the said earl, and to seize upon his country," &c.

Who is this, that forgiveth sins, except God only? and,

* Article XXXI.

who is this, that also dispenses with the most solemn moral obligations? Is he not Antichrist, showing himself that he is God? On this and some other occasions I choose to give the very expressions of the papal bulls, as a sufficient confutation of the sophisms by which some modern writers have endeavoured to palliate or do away the crimes of the popedom. The language, indeed, of our early protestant writers against popery is severe beyond measure; but it hardly could be equal to the desert of those whom they opposed. The most material error of the modern Protestants, as I have before observed, on these subjects, seems to be, that they have been too hasty in fixing the date of the MAN OF SIN. But after he really appeared in the horrors of his maturity, he was all which the most impassioned declaimer can say against him.

The tyrant proceeds in his bull: "we exhort you, that you would endeavour to destroy the wicked heresy of the Albigenses, and do this with more rigour than you would use towards the Saracens themselves: persecute them with a strong hand: deprive them of their lands and possessions: banish them, and put Roman Catholics in their room." Such was the pope's method of punishing a whole people, for a single murder committed by Raymond. Philip Augustus, king of France, was at that time too much engaged in wars with Otho the emperor, and John king of England, to enter upon the crusades. But the French barons, incited by the motives of avarice, which Innocent suggested, undertook the work with vigour.

Bull of Innocent III. against the Albigenses.

Raymond of Toulouse was now struck with terror. Political motives had fixed him with the Protestant party, because his subjects and neighbours were very commonly on that side. But he himself seems to have wanted a divine principle of faith to animate his mind in the defence of the righteous cause. The other princes, his neighbours, seem equally destitute of the spirit of genuine religion. They might have resisted their enemies very vigorously by the aid of their subjects, whose loyalty was unalterably firm, and who knew it was a religious duty to be faithful to their temporal sovereigns. In those feudal times, Raymond, rather than Philip, was sovereign of the

people of Toulouse: the spirit of the Protestants was strong and powerful; and even the Romanists, who were mixed with them, were perfectly disposed to unite in the common defence. But I find not in all the account of the war a single instance of a prince or leader, who was faithful to the cause of God as such. No wonder then that the chiefs sunk under the load of oppression, and suffered themselves, repeatedly, to be the dupes of Roman perfidy. The Christians had then no other part to act, after having discharged the duty of faithful subjects and soldiers, but to suffer with patience the oppressions of Antichrist.

Three hundred thousand pilgrims, induced by the united motives of avarice and superstition, filled the country of the Albigenses with carnage and confusion for a number of years. The reader, who is not versed in history of this kind, can scarcely

Barbarities
of the Papal
party.

conceive the scenes of baseness, perfidy, barbarity, indecency and hypocrisy, over which Innocent presided; and which were conducted partly by his legates, and partly by the infamous earl Simon of Montfort.

Particularly
of Simon of
Montfort.

But let it suffice to have said this in general: it is more to our purpose to observe the spirit of the people of God in these grievous tribulations. The

Simon takes
the Castle of
Menerbe.

castle of Menerbe on the frontiers of Spain, for want of water, was reduced to the necessity of surrendering to the pope's legate. A

certain abbot undertook to preach to those who were found in the castle, and to exhort them to acknowledge the pope. But they interrupted his discourse, declaring

His cruelty.

that his labour was to no purpose. Earl Simon and the legate then caused a great fire to be kindled; and they burned a hundred and forty persons of both sexes. These martyrs died in triumph, praising God that he had counted them worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ. They opposed the legate to his face, and told Simon, that on the last day, when the books should be opened, he would meet with the just judgment of God for all his cruelties. Several monks entreated them to have pity on themselves, and promised them their lives if they would submit to the popedom. But the Christians

"loved not their lives to the death *:" only three women of the company recanted.

Another castle, named Termes, not far from Menerbe, in the territory of Narbonne, was taken by Simon in the year 1210. "This place," said Simon, "is of all others the most execrable, because no mass has been sung in it for thirty years." A remark which gives us some idea both of the stability and numbers of the Waldenses: the very worship of popery, it seems, was expelled from this place. The inhabitants made their escape by night, and avoided the merciless hands of Simon.

Simon takes
the Castle
of Termes,
A. D. 1210.

A single act of humanity, exercised by this general on the principles of chivalry, toward several women, whose persons he preserved from military insult and outrage, is the only one of the kind recorded of him.

But the triumphing of the wicked is short: after he had been declared sovereign of Toulouse, which he had conquered, General of the armies of the Church, its Son and its darling, after he had oppressed and tyrannized over the Albigenses by innumerable confiscations and exactions, he was slain in battle in the year 1218.

Simon slain,
A. D. 1218.

Earl Raymond, whose life had been a scene of great calamity, died of sickness in the year 1222, in a state of peace and prosperity, after his victory over Simon. We are told, that, though political and humane motives at first alone influenced his conduct, he at length saw the falsity of the popish doctrine. No man, surely, was ever treated with more injustice by the popedom,—not to mention that his memory is clouded with the suspicion of the murder before mentioned †. But I know no evidence of his religious knowledge and piety. His persecutor, Innocent, died in 1216; and the famous Dominic, who, according to the assertion of our author Perrin, was active in the Inquisition, and was accustomed to the destruction which Simon had begun by arms, died in the year 1220.

Earl Ray-
mond dies,
A. D. 1222.

Innocent
III. died,
A. D. 1216.

Dominic,
died,
A. D. 1220.

Amalric of Montfort, the son of Simon, wearied out

* Rev. xii. 7.

† See page 133 of this Vol.

with the war, resigned to Lewis VIII. the son and successor of Philip, all his possessions and pretensions in the country of the Albigenses; in recompense of which, the French king made him constable of France, in the year 1224. This was the step which proved the ruin of the Albigenses. The French monarchy was now interested in their destruction; and though Lewis VIII. died soon after, and Lewis IX. his son and successor, was a minor, yet the capacity of the regent, the queen mother, was found equal to the work of aggrandizing the crown at the expense of the Albigenses. Raymond, the heir of his father's miseries, was treated with the most merciless barbarity; and, after a series of sufferings, died of a fever at Milan.

Alphonsus, brother of Lewis IX. was put into possession of the earldom of Toulouse. Joan, the only daughter of the late earl Raymond, had been delivered, when only nine years old, to the French court, that she might, when of age, be married to Alphonsus. Thus secular and ecclesiastical ambition united to oppress the Churches of Christ. The monk Reinerius, whom we have had occasion repeatedly to quote, acted as inquisitor in the year 1250.

There is evidence of the extreme violence of persecution continued against the Albigenses, now altogether defenceless, to the year 1281. Long before this, in the year 1229, a council was held at Toulouse, one of the canons of which was, that the laity were not allowed to have the Old or New Testament in the vulgar tongue, except a psalter or the like; and it forbid men even to translate the Scriptures.

This is the first instance in the popedom which I meet with, of a direct prohibition of the books of Scripture to the laity. Indirectly the same thing had long been practised. What an honour was this canon to the cause of the Albigenses! What a confession of guilt on the side of the Romanists! The people of God were thus, at length, for the most part, exterminated in Toulouse, and found

Amalric, the son of Simon of Montfort, resigns his Albigensian possessions to the French,

A. D. 1224.

Reinerius was inquisitor,

A. D. 1250.

This persecution continued violent till about

A. D. 1281.

The first instance of a direct prohibition of the Scriptures to the Laity took place,

A. D. 1229.

no other resource but, by patient continuance in well-doing, to commit themselves to their God and Saviour. Antichrist, for the present, was visibly triumphant in the south-west parts of France, and the witnesses, "clothed in sackcloth," there consoled themselves with the hope of heavenly rest, being deprived of all prospect of earthly enjoyments.

It may not be improper to mention here, that our famous monkish historian, Matthew Paris, relates that the Albigenses set up a person named Bartholomew for pope, who resided in the neighbourhood of Toulouse, consecrated bishops, and governed their churches; and that in one battle the Albigenses lost a hundred thousand men, with all their bishops.

These stories easily confute themselves; nor is it necessary to observe, that the ignorance of M. Paris, in French history, is palpably glaring. The only use which I would make of this fiction is to show, how unsafe it is to rely on rumours, concerning subjects which affect the passions of mankind, published by persons who live in places very distant from the scene of action; and to guard the minds of those among ourselves, who hear stories concerning professors of godliness, propagated by men, who are unacquainted with the grounds of religious controversy.

Dauphiny is a province of France, which was very full of the Waldenses, who inhabited vallies on both sides of the Alps. On the Italian side, the valley of Pragela in particular had, in our author's time, in 1618, six churches, each having its pastor, and every pastor having the care of several villages, which appertained to his church. The oldest people in them, Perrin observes, never remembered to have heard mass sung in their country. The valley itself was one of the most secure retreats of the Waldenses, being environed on all sides with mountains, into whose caverns the people were accustomed to retreat in time of persecution. Vignaux, one of their preachers, used to admire the integrity of the people, whom no dangers whatever could seduce from the faith of their ancestors. Their children were catechised with the minutest care; and their pastors

The valley of
Pragela had
six churches,
A. D. 1618.

not only exhorted them on the sabbaths, but also, on the week days went to their hamlets to instruct them. With much inconvenience to themselves, these teachers climbed the steepest mountains to visit their flocks. The word of God was heard with reverence: the voice of prayer was common in private houses, as well as in the churches: Christian simplicity and zeal abounded; and plain useful learning was diligently cultivated in the schools.

A monk inquisitor, named Francis Borelli, in the year 1380, armed with a bull of Clement VII. undertook to persecute the godly Waldenses. In the space of thirteen years he delivered a hundred and fifty persons to the secular power, to be burned at Grenoble. In the valley of Fraissiniere and the neighbourhood, he apprehended eighty persons, who also were burned. The monkish inquisitors adjudged one moiety of the goods of the persons condemned to themselves, the rest to the temporal lords. What efforts may not be expected, when avarice, malice, and superstition unite in the same cause?

Cruelties of
the Inquisitor
Borelli,
A. D. 1380.

About the year 1400, the persecutors attacked the Waldenses of the valley of Pragela. The poor people seeing their caves possessed by their enemies, who assaulted them during the severity of the winter, retreated to one of the highest mountains of the Alps, the mothers carrying cradles, and leading by the hand those little children who were able to walk. Many of them were murdered, others were starved to death: a hundred and eighty children were found dead in their cradles, and the greatest part of their mothers died soon after them. But why should I relate all the particulars of such a scene of infernal barbarity?

Persecutions
in the valley
of Pragela,
A. D. 1400.

In 1460, those of the valley of Fraissiniere were persecuted by a monk of the order of Friar Minors, or Franciscans, armed with the authority of the archbishop of Ambrun. And it appears from documents preserved till the time of Perrin, that every method which fraud and calumny could invent, was practised against them.

Also in the
valley of
Fraissiniere,
A. D. 1460.

In the valley of Loyse, four hundred little children

were found suffocated in their cradles, or in the arms of their deceased mothers, in consequence of a great quantity of wood being placed at the entrance of the caves and set on fire. On the whole, above three thousand persons belonging to the valley were destroyed, and this righteous people were in that place exterminated. The Waldenses of Pragela and Fraissiniere, alarmed by these sanguinary proceedings, made provision for their own safety, and expected the enemy at the passage and narrow straits of their vallies, and were in fact so well prepared to receive them, that the invaders were obliged to retreat. Some attempts were made afterwards by the Waldenses in Fraissiniere to regain their property, which had been unjustly seized by their persecutors. The favour of Lewis XII. of France, was exerted toward them ; yet they could never obtain any remedy.

And in the
valley of
Loyse.

In Piedmont the archbishops of Turin assiduously laboured to molest the Waldenses, having been informed by the priests in those vallies, that the people made no offerings for the dead, valued not masses and absolutions, and took no care to redeem their relations from the pains of purgatory. The love of lucre, no doubt, had a principal share in promoting the persecutions ; for the sums collected by the means of these and similar vanities, were immense. The princes of Piedmont, however, who were the dukes of Savoy, were very unwilling to disturb their subjects, of whose loyalty, peaceableness, industry and probity, they received such uniform testimony. A fact, which seems peculiarly to demonstrate their general innocence, must be noticed ; their neighbours particularly prized a Piedmontese servant, and preferred the women of the vallies above all others, to nurse their children. Calumny, however, prevailed at length ; and such a number of accusations against them appeared, charging them with crimes of the most monstrous nature, that the civil power permitted the papal to indulge its thirst for blood. Dreadful cruelties were inflicted on the people of God ; and these, by their constancy, revived the memory of the primitive martyrs. Among them Catelin Girard was distinguished, who, standing on the block, on which he was

to be burned, at Revel in the marquisate of Saluces, requested his executioners to give him two stones : which request being with difficulty obtained, the martyr, holding them in his hands, said, When I have eaten these stones, then you shall see an end of that religion for which ye put me to death. And then he cast the stones on the ground.

The fires continued to be kindled till the year 1488, when the method of military violence was adopted by the persecutors. Albert de Capitaneis, archdeacon of Cremona, was deputed by pope Innocent VIII. to assault the sufferers with the sword. Eighteen thousand soldiers were raised for the service, besides many of the Piedmontese papists, who ran to the plunder from all parts. But the Waldenses, armed with wooden targets and crossbows, and availing themselves of the natural advantages of their situation, repulsed their enemies ; the women and children on their knees entreating the Lord to protect his people, during the engagement.

Philip, duke of Savoy, had the candour to distinguish the spirit of resistance made by his subjects in this transaction, from a spirit of sedition and turbulence, being convinced that they had ever been a loyal and obedient people. He accepted, therefore, their apology, and forgave them what was past. But having been informed, that their young children were born with black throats ; that they were hairy, and had four rows of teeth, he ordered some of them to be brought before him to Pignerol ; where, having convinced himself by ocular demonstration, that the Waldenses were not monsters, he determined to protect them from the persecution. But he seems not to have had sufficient power to execute his

Military
violence
employed
against the
Waldenses,
A. D. 1488.

good intentions. The papal inquisitors daily endeavoured to apprehend these sincere followers of Christ, and the persecution lasted till

A. D. 1532. the year 1532. Then it was that the Piedmontese began openly to perform divine worship in their churches. This provoked the civil power, at length, against them to such a degree, that it concurred more vigorously with the papal measures of military violence.

The perse-
cution con-
tinued till
about
A. D. 1532.

The Waldenses, however, defended themselves with courage and success: the priests left the country: the mass was expelled from Piedmont; and, where-
 as the people had hitherto only the New Testament and some books of the Old translated into the Waldensian tongue, they now sent the whole Bible to the press; for, till 1535, they had only manuscripts, and those few in number. They procured at Neuf Chatel in Switzerland, a printed Bible from one, who published the first impression of the Word of God which was seen in France. They endeavoured to provide themselves also with religious books from Geneva, but their messenger was apprehended and put to death.

The Waldensians defend themselves manfully against both the civil and papal power.

They expel the Mass, and print all the Bible,

A. D. 1535.

The persecutions were continued against this people by Francis I. king of France, with savage barbarity; and, in particular, Jeffery, who was burned in the castle-yard at Turin, made a strong impression on the minds of many, by his piety, meekness, and constancy.

It would be uninteresting to pursue circumstantially the story of the persecutions, which continued with more or less violence till the end of the sixteenth century, when Bartholomew Copin, of the valley of Lucerne, being at Ast in Piedmont with merchandise for the fair, was apprehended for uttering some words against the papacy. He bore his sufferings with much firmness and constancy, and resisted various attempts of the monks to overcome his spirit. He wrote to his wife, professing his entire dependence on the grace of Jesus Christ for his salvation. But he died in prison, not without suspicion of having been strangled. After his death his body was consumed by fire.

Persecution and death of Bartholomew Copin.

The Christian rules of submission to governments, and the practice of the Waldenses in general, were at no great variance. Yet, it is certain, that the primitive Christians would have conscientiously refused to bear arms at all against their own sovereigns, however tyrannical and oppressive they might be. Whether, in some instances, these persecuted Christians of the vallies did not violate

the apostolical precepts on this subject*, is not very easy to be decided, because it requires a minute acquaintance with their particular circumstances, to determine who was their sovereign. Sometimes they were under the king of France ; at other times under the duke of Savoy ; and, it is not to be doubted, but that, at all times, they had a right to resist the pope as a foreign enemy, and an enemy of uncommon ambition, injustice, and cruelty.

At the end of the sixteenth century, in consequence of some exchange made by virtue of a treaty between Henry IV. of France and the duke of Savoy, the Waldenses of the marquisate of Saluces lost the privileges which they had enjoyed under the French government : and, by the oppression of their new sovereign of Savoy, through the importunity of the pope, were obliged to fly into France for security. Some of them, from the love of the world, renounced the faith ; but the greatest part preferred exile with a good conscience, to an enjoyment of their native country. On this occasion, they declared, in a well-written manifesto, their spirit of loyalty and peaceableness, the hardships of their case, and their perfect agreement in principle with all the reformed Churches. So certain is it, that the Waldenses were, in every substantial article, genuine protestants and witnesses of evangelical truth.

A number of Waldenses, who resided in the Alps, possessed several villages, and in particular, the city of Alpian Wal-
denses are
persecuted,
A. D. 1570. Barcelonette. These, being persecuted by the prince of Piedmont in the year 1570, in conjunction with some others, implored the protestant princes to intercede with their sovereign on their behalf. The prince palatine of the Rhine exerted himself with much zeal on the occasion. But the people of Barcelonette being obliged to leave their settlements, amidst a choice of difficulties, were reduced to the extremity of attempting, in the midst of winter, to pass over a high mountain. The greatest part of them perished ; the rest retired into the valley of Fraissiniere.

About the year 1370 some of the Waldensian youths of Dauphiny sought in Calabria a new settlement, because

* Rom. xiii. 1 Pet. ii.

their native country was too small for the number of the inhabitants. Finding the soil fertile, and the region thinly peopled, they applied to the proprietors of the lands, and treated with them concerning the conditions of dwelling there. The lords of the country gave them the most kind reception, agreed with them on fair and equitable terms, and assigned them parcels of lands. The new colonists soon enriched and fertilized their respective districts by superior industry: and, by probity, peaceable manners, and punctual payment of their rents, they gained the affections of their landlords, and of all their neighbours. The priests alone, who found that they did not act like others in religion, and that they contributed nothing to the support of the hierarchy by masses for the dead, or by other Romish formalities, were highly offended. They were particularly vexed to find, that certain foreign schoolmasters, who taught the children of these strangers, were held in high respect, and that they themselves received nothing from them except tithes, which were paid according to the compact with their lords. From these circumstances, the priests concluding that the strangers must be heretics, were tempted to complain of them to the pope. The lords, however, withheld them from complaining of the people. "They are just and honest," say they, "and have enriched all the country. Even ye priests have received substantial emolument from their labours. The tithes alone, which ye now receive, are so much superior to those which were formerly produced from these countries, that you may well bear with some losses on other accounts. Perhaps the country whence they came is not so much addicted to the ceremonies of the Roman Church. But as they fear God, are liberal to the needy, just and beneficent to all men, it is ungenerous anxiously to scrutinize their consciences. For are they not a temperate, sober, prudent people, and in their words peculiarly decent? And does any person ever hear them utter a blasphemous expression?" The lords admiring their tenants, who were distinguished from the inhabitants all around by probity and virtue, maintained

There had been a Waldensian settlement in Calabria, A. D. 1370.

The Lords of the country protected the settlement till A. D. 1560.

and protected them against their enemies till the year 1560.

In all this the fruits of godliness among the Waldenses were apparent, even to those who knew not the nature of godliness itself. The lords, moved by temporal interest, behaved with candour, while the priests, who felt, or thought they felt, their interest undermined by these strangers, murmured and expressed their indignation. It is not to be wondered at, that the priests of idolatry should every where be the greatest enemies of true religion. It is nothing more than the natural effect of human depravity. Their passions, through the medium of interest, are more sensibly struck at than those of others; and the true use to be made of such events, is, for all men, laity, as well as priests, to learn the true doctrine of the fall of man,

In that year
the Calabrian
Waldenses
sent for a
supply of
Pastors to
Geneva.

and its consequences. The Calabrian Waldenses sent to Geneva in the year 1560, to request a supply of pastors. Two, namely, Stephen Negrin and Lewis Paschal, were sent into Calabria; who endeavoured to establish the public exercise of protestantism. Pope Pius IV.

having notice of this, determined to extirpate a people who had presumed to plant Lutheranism,—so he called their religion,—so near to his seat. What follows of the history of this people, is a distressful scene of persecution. Numbers of them being murdered, by two companies of soldiers, headed by the pope's agents, the rest craved mercy for themselves, their wives and children, declaring, that if they were permitted to leave the country with a

Dreadful
persecution
ensued by
Pope Pius
IV.

few conveniences, they would not return to it any more. But their enemies knew not how to show mercy; and the persecuted Christians at length defended themselves from their invaders,

and put them to flight. The viceroy of Naples, hearing of these things, appeared in person to prosecute the diabolical business of the pope; and, in a little time, the Calabrian Waldenses were entirely exterminated. The most barbarous cruelties were inflicted on many: some were tortured, in order to oblige them to own that their friends had committed the most flagitious incests; and the whole apparatus of pagan persecution was seen to be revived in the south of Italy.

A certain youth, named Samson, defended himself a long time against those who came to apprehend him. But being wounded, he was at length taken, and led to the top of a tower. Confess yourself to a priest here present, said the persecutors, before you be thrown down. I have already, said Samson, confessed myself to God. Throw him down from the tower, said the inquisitor. The next day the viceroy passing below near the said tower, saw the poor man yet alive, with all his bones broken. He kicked him with his foot on the head, saying, Is the dog yet alive? Give him to the hogs to eat.

The story of Samson.

But I turn from a scene, where there is nothing but a repetition of enormities, which have often been exposed in the course of this history, and which equally show the influence of the prince of darkness, and the enmity of the carnal mind against God: let it suffice to add, that Stephen Negrin was starved to death in prison, and that Lewis Paschal was conveyed to Rome, where he was burned alive in the presence of Pius IV. That tyrant feasted his eyes with the sight of the man in the flames, who had dared to call him Antichrist. Paschal, however, was enabled to testify, in his last scenes, from the word of God, many things which much displeased the pope; and, by the zeal, constancy, and piety, which he displayed in his death, he failed not to excite the pity and admiration of the spectators.

The Waldenses of Provence fertilized a barren soil by their industry, but, like their brethren elsewhere, were exposed to persecution. An attempt was made to prejudice the mind of Lewis XII. against them, about the year 1506, by such calumnies as those with which the primitive Christians were aspersed. The king, struck with horror, directed the parliament of Provence to investigate the charges, and to punish those who were found guilty. But afterwards, understanding that some innocent men were put to death, he sent two persons to inquire into the conduct of this people, by whose distinct information he was so thoroughly convinced of their innocence, that he swore they were better men than himself and his Catholic sub-

Calumnies against the Waldenses of Provence, A. D. 1506.

jects; and he protected them during the rest of his reign. Thus the candour, humanity, and generosity of that monarch, who was deservedly looked on as the father of his people, was providentially instrumental in the defence of the Waldenses.

Some time after, these Provençal protestants wrote a letter to the reformer Ecolampadius of Basle, which, as a monument of Christian humility and simplicity, well deserves to be transcribed. "Health to Mr. Ecolampadius. Whereas several persons have given us to understand, that He, who is able to do all things, hath replenished you with his Holy Spirit, as it conspicuously appears by the fruits; we, therefore, have recourse to you from a far country, with a steadfast hope, that the Holy Ghost will enlighten our understanding by your means, and give us the knowledge of several things in which we are now doubtful, and which are hidden from us, because of our slothful ignorance and remissness, to the great damage, as we fear, both of ourselves and of the people of whom we are the unworthy teachers. That you may know at once how matters stand with us, we, such as we are, poor instructors of this small people, have undergone, for above four hundred years, most cruel persecutions, not without signal marks of the favour of Christ; for he hath interposed to deliver us, when under the harrow of severe tribulations. In this our state of weakness we come to you for advice and consolation."

They wrote in the same strain to other reformers, and were, it seems, so zealous to profit by their superior light and knowledge, that they willingly exposed themselves, by this means, to a share of the same persecutions which at that time oppressed the Lutherans,—so the reformed were then generally called,—both in France and through all Europe.

Ecolampadius, in the year 1530, wrote to the Waldenses of Provence, to protest against the crime of attending the mass and bowing before idols, with which some of them were infected. He showed that such pretended satisfactions for the sins of the living and the dead, implied that Jesus Christ had not made sufficient expiation, that

Ecolampadius admonishes the Waldenses of Provence, A. D. 1530.

he is no Saviour, and died for us in vain ; and that, if it be lawful for us to conceal our faith under the tyranny of Antichrist, it would have been lawful to worship Jupiter or Venus. These admonitions were well adapted to the circumstances of the Waldenses ; for they soon after had large occasion to practise them. Even one of the messengers, who brought the letters, was seized in his journey at Dijon, and condemned to death as a Lutheran. In the parliament of Aix, in the year 1540, one of the most inhuman edicts recorded in history was pronounced against the Provençal Christians. It was ordered that the country of Merindol should be laid waste, and the woods cut down, to the compass of two hundred paces around. The name and authority of king Francis I. was obtained by surprise, and the revocation of the edict, which he afterwards sent to the parliament on better information, was suppressed by the persecutors. The murders, rapes, and desolations, were horrible beyond all description. In particular, a number of women were shut up in a barn full of straw, which was set on fire ; and a soldier, moved with compassion, having opened a place for them, that they might escape, these helpless victims of papal rage were driven back into the flames by pikes and halberts. Other cruelties were practised on this occasion, so horrid, that they might seem to exceed belief, were not the authenticity of the accounts unquestionable ; and he who knows what human nature is when left to itself and to Satan, knows that there is no evil of which it is not capable.

Inhuman
Edict against
them by the
Parliament
of Aix,
A. D. 1540.

In justice, however, to Francis I. a prince in his temper by no means cruel and oppressive, it is proper to add, that being informed of the execution of this barbarous edict, to which he had with great precipitation given his name, he was filled with bitter remorse, being now at the point of death, and he charged his son Henry to punish the murderers. The advocate Guerin, however, was the only person who was punished on the occasion. He was, in truth, the most guilty, because it was he who had suppressed the king's revocation of the bloody edict.

Those who had escaped, afterwards by degrees recovered their possessions, and taking advantage of the edict

of Nantes, enjoyed the protection of government, in common with the rest of the Protestants in France.

If we look into Bohemia, the country in which Waldo ended his days, we find that the Waldensian Churches existed there in the fourteenth century, but that they had been broken up as a professing people, when the Hussites,—of whom hereafter,—began to flourish. The Hussites were later than they by two hundred and forty years, and are allowed by their own writers to have agreed in principle with the Waldenses; none of whose writings, however, were extant in Bohemia at the time when the doctrine of Huss was received in that country. So completely had papal tyranny prevailed! But Providence raised up other witnesses.

In Austria, the number of Waldenses was exceedingly great. About the year 1467, the Hussites entered into a Christian correspondence with them; in the course of which they gently rebuked them on account of the idolatrous compliances too visible in their churches. The Hussites also found fault with them, because they were too solicitous in amassing wealth. “Every day,” say they, “has its cares and afflictions; but as Christians ought to look only for heavenly riches, we cannot but condemn your excessive attention to the world, by which you may gradually be induced to set your whole heart on the things of time and sense.” This looks like the language of younger converts, who, having not yet forsaken their “first love*,” are apt to see the evils of a worldly spirit in a stronger light even than older and more experienced Christians, who may have sunk into lukewarmness. It should be remembered that the Hussites were, at this time, beginners in religion, compared to the Waldenses. These latter were, however, exposed soon after this to terrible persecutions; and those of them who escaped fled into Bohemia, and united themselves to the Hussites.

In Germany, in the year 1230, the papal inquisition oppressed the Waldenses with peculiar severity. They were, notwithstanding, steadfast in their profession; and their pastors publicly announced the pope to be

The German Waldenses
grievously persecuted by the
papal inquisition, A.D. 1230.

* Rev. ii.

Antichrist, affirming, that if God had not sent them into Germany to preach the Gospel, the very stones would have been raised up to instruct mankind. "We give not," say they, "a fictitious remission, but we preach the remission of sins appointed by God himself in his Word."

About the year 1330, Echard, a Dominican monk, an inquisitor, grievously oppressed them.

Very remarkable story of Echard, a Dominican monk,

At length, after many cruelties, he urged the Waldenses to inform him of the real cause of their separation from the Church of Rome, being convinced in his conscience of the justice of several of their charges. This was an opportunity not often vouchsafed to this people by their enemies, of using the weapons of Christian warfare. The event was salutary: Echard was enlightened, confessed the faith of Christ, united himself to his people; like Paul he preached the faith which once he destroyed; and, in the issue, was burned at Heidelberg; and the Christians glorified God in him.

A.D. 1330.

Raynard Lollard was another convert of the same kind, at first a Franciscan and an enemy to the Waldenses. He was taken by the inquisitors after he had diligently taught the Gospel, and was burned at Cologne. From him the Wickliffites in England were called Lollards; and he it was who instructed the English who resided in Guienne in the Waldensian doctrine. The connexion between France and England, during the whole reign of Edward III. was so great, that it is by no means improbable, that Wickliffe himself derived his first impressions of religion from Lollard. Princes and states may carry on wars and negotiations with one another: while HE, who rules all things, makes every event subservient to the great design of spreading the kingdom of his Son.

Flanders was also a violent scene of Waldensian persecution, though our author seems to know little of the particulars. From another writer* it appears, that in 1163 some of the Waldenses retired from Flanders to Cologne. Here they were discovered and confined in a barn. Egbert, an abbot, disputed with them: three were burned; and a young woman whom the people would have

Violent persecutions in Flanders, A.D. 1163.

* Brandt's Hist. of the Reform. in the Netherlands.

Also in the year, A. D. 1183. Robert, a Dominican, burnt or buried alive more than fifty persons, spared, threw herself into the flames. In 1183, great numbers were burnt alive. A person named Robert, first a Waldensian, afterwards a Dominican, was appointed inquisitor-general by the pope. This man, knowing the usual places of concealment, burned or buried alive about fifty persons in the year 1236. But he met with that punishment in this life, which was calculated to convince him of his enormous sin. The pope suspended him for the abuse of his power, and condemned him to perpetual imprisonment.

Persecutors in Flanders tormented the Christians by means of hornets, wasps, and hives of bees. The people of God, however, were strong in faith and love. They turned the Scripture into Low Dutch rhimes, for the edification of the brethren ; and they gave this reason for the practice : “ In Scripture there are no jests, fables, trifles, or deceits ; but words of solid truth. Here and there, indeed, is a hard crust ; but the marrow and sweetness of what is good and holy may easily be discovered in it.” A peculiar regard for Holy Writ amidst ages of darkness, forms the glory of the Waldensian Churches.

England, because of its insular situation, knew less of all these scenes than the Continent. But the striking narrative of the sufferers, in the time of Henry II. which has been recorded, ought to be added to the list of Waldensian persecutions. No part of Europe, in short, was exempt from the sufferings of these Christian heroes. Paris itself, the metropolis of France, saw, in 1304, a hundred and fourteen persons burned alive, who bore the flames with admirable constancy.

Thus largely did the “ King of Saints * ” provide for the instruction of his Church, in the darkness of the middle ages. The Waldenses are the middle link, which connects the primitive Christians and Fathers with the reformed ; and, by their means, the proof is completely established, that salvation, by the grace of Christ, felt in the heart, and expressed in the life, by the power of the Holy Ghost, has ever existed from the time of the Apostles

* Rev. xv. 3.

till this day; and that it is a doctrine marked by the Cross, and distinct from all that religion of mere form or convenience, or of human invention, which calls itself Christian, but wants the spirit of Christ.

CHAP. V.

THE GENERAL STATE OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

It was judged proper to give one unbroken Narrative of Waldensian transactions in Ecclesiastical matters, till the time of the Reformation.

That Narrative is contained in the four preceding Chapters; and though it does not belong to the thirteenth century exclusively, it is, however, as was before observed, ascribed to it, because in the course of the thirteenth century, most extraordinary persecutions and conflicts took place among the Waldenses, and particularly excited the attention of Europe. Our immediate business must now be the continuation of that Century.

FROM the animosity of the Waldensian persecutions, and from the unanimity with which the powers of the earth, both secular and ecclesiastical, supported these persecutions, the Reader is prepared already to conclude, that, abstracted from the Churches of the valleys, and their connexions, there was scarcely in Europe, at that time, a visible Church of Christ to be found. But there were, as the Waldenses confessed, some "individual souls in Babylon," who loved the Lord, and served him with their spirit under all these disadvantages. I shall reserve to the two next Chapters the distinct account of these individuals.

In this Chapter I propose to give a view of the general state of Christendom, which, though it is an indirect method of illustrating the circumstances of the real Church of Christ, is yet the only one which the depravity of the times can afford us.

The gloom of ignorance was immensely great, nor was it abated, but, in some respects, rather increased, by

Celebrity of
the Philoso-
phy of
Aristotle.

the growing celebrity of the Aristotelian philosophy. For by it the understandings of men were furnished with polemical weapons, but by no means enlightened with useful truths. Endless questions were started; and as every disputant, by the very nature of the learning then in vogue, was much more engaged in confounding his adversary, than in explaining any one object of science, hence, every serious enquirer after truth must have been embarrassed beyond measure. The controversial combatants, while they raised and agitated the dust of contentions, suffocated each other, and gave no real light, either to themselves, or to the world in general. The unlettered part of mankind admired their "seraphic*" skill and ingenuity, little suspecting that these disputatious doctors were not, in their knowledge, many degrees removed above the most ignorant and vulgar. Some few there were of superior genius and penetration, who saw through the sophistry of the fashionable learning, and cultivated a more reasonable mode of intellectual improvement.

Roger Bacon, the Franciscan Friar, stands distinguished among these. His knowledge of astronomy, optics, and mathematics, as well as of Greek and Oriental learning, was wonderful for those times. But he and a very few others shone in vain, except to themselves, in the firmament of knowledge. All feared, scarcely any aided, and very few understood them. Bacon himself, the glory of the British nation, was many years confined in a loathsome prison, and was strongly suspected of dealing in magic. I know no evidence of his piety and love of evangelical truth; and therefore it is not pertinent to the design of this History to enlarge on his character. But a few words expressive of his contempt of the learning of his contemporaries deserve to be quoted †. "Never," says he, "was there so great an appearance of wisdom, nor so much exercise of study, in so many faculties and in so many countries, as within these last forty years. For doctors are every where dispersed, in every city and borough, especially by the two

* Bonaventura was called, the seraphic doctor; Francis, the seraphic father.

† Mosheim, Vol. I. p. 637. note (d)

studious orders, when at the same time there never was so great ignorance. The herd of students fatigue themselves, and play the fool, about the miserable translations of Aristotle, and lose their time, their labour, and their expense. Appearances alone engage them; and they have no care to acquire real knowledge, but only to seem knowing in the eyes of the senseless multitude."

Bacon, by the two studious orders, means the Dominicans and Franciscans, who were almost the only orders which devoted themselves to study. These men had AMPLE buildings and princely houses*. They attended the death-beds of the rich and great, and urged them to bequeath immense legacies to their own orders. The subtle jargon of the schools infected their whole semblance of learning. However, as they appeared more knowing, and were certainly more studious than the other orders, they gained much ground in this century; and indeed till the time of the institution of the Jesuits, they were the pillars of the papacy. Persecution of heretics, so called, formed a great part of their employment. The Dominicans † in particular were the founders of the Inquisition. These last came into England about the year 1221, and first appeared at Oxford. The Franciscans were first settled at Canterbury in 1234. They both cultivated the Aristotelian philosophy, and being the confidential agents of the pope, they, under various pretences, exacted large sums of money through the kingdom, and fleeced even the abbots of the monasteries. The bishops and secular clergy saw themselves excluded by these means from the confidence of the laity. For, in auricular confessions, and other superstitions of the times, the friars had, by the pope's authority, very much arrogated to themselves the power, which had formerly been possessed by the clergy ‡.

The Dominicans came into England about

A. D. 1221.

The Franciscans about

A. D. 1234.

The Franciscans particularly undermined the influence of the secular ecclesiastics by popular practices: they preached both in towns and in the country: they pretended to no property: they lived on contributions of

* History of the Abbey of St. Alban's, by Newcombe.

† These were also called Jacobins, from their settlement in St. James's-street in Paris.

‡ Hist. Abbey of St. Alban's.

their audiences, and walked barefoot and in mean habits. On Sundays and holydays crowds were collected to hear them ; and they were received as confessors in preference to the bishops and clergy : and thus, when the credit of the other monastic orders was well nigh exhausted, and the secular clergy, through immoralities, had been reduced to contempt, two new orders, having the semblance of worth, not the substance, revived the authority of the Romish church, supported the papacy, strengthened every reigning superstition, and, by deep-laid plans of hypocrisy, induced numbers to enrich both the papacy and the monastic foundations.

A remarkable instance of papal tyranny, exercised through their means in this century, will show the abject slavery and superstition under which this Island groaned. In 1247 Innocent IV. gave a commission to John the Franciscan, as follows :

Remarkable instance of papal tyranny,

A. D. 1247. “ We charge you, that if the major part of the English prelates should make answer, that they are exempt from foreign jurisdiction, you demand a greater sum, and compel them, by ecclesiastical censures, to withdraw their appeals, any privilege or indulgence notwithstanding.”

This was the famous “ non obstante clause,” by which the pope, in the plenitude of his dominion, assumed to himself the same dispensing power in the church which King James II. did long after in the state.

The “ non obstante clause.”

But the punishment of the former for his temerity and arrogance followed not so soon as in the case of the latter. For God had put into the hearts of princes and statesmen to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled *. And thus the wickedness of men in neglecting his Gospel was justly punished.

So shameless were the popes at this time in their exactions, and so secure was their hold on the abject superstition of mankind, that they grossly defrauded even the Franciscans themselves, and were not afraid of the consequences. Men, who received not the testimony of Jesus Christ, and refused submission to his easy yoke, were induced to kiss the iron rod of an Italian tyrant.

* Rev. xvii. 17.

Two observations of Matthew Paris, taken from different parts of his history, and compared together, seem to me to illustrate in a good degree the nature of the subjection in which the spirits of men were held in those times. Speaking of the innumerable oppressions and corruptions of the popedom, which particularly prevailed during the long reign of King Henry III. the pusillanimous successor of King John, he breaks out into an animated apostrophy to the pope:—"Holy father, why do you permit such disorders? you deserve the hardships you undergo: you deserve to wander like Cain through the earth.—I would know what preferment an Englishman ever obtains in Italy? What just reason can possibly be assigned, why foreigners should prey on the revenues of our church?—Our sins have brought these calamities upon us*." The historian alludes to the residence of Innocent IV. at Lyons, where he was obliged to hide himself from the factions which had expelled him from Italy at that time. I observe also, that this is that same pope, who gave the imperious commission to John the Franciscan, mentioned above, which commission also was dated from Lyons. If the reader lay all these circumstances together, the unexampled tyranny of the papal measures, the shameless violation of every principle of equity and decorum in the conduct of the Italian legates and agents, the strong indignation expressed against these things by such learned men as Matthew Paris, and even the open opposition made to the pope in those times, he may be disposed to wonder why the Roman hierarchy was not destroyed by a combination of princes and states. If this be a difficulty, the consideration of another passage of Matthew Paris will sufficiently explain it. Though he himself has given us the plainest accounts of the enormities of King John, who was beyond question, in every light, one of the worst of princes, and one of the worst of men, yet he observes, "We ought to hope, and most assuredly to trust, that some good works, which he did in this life, will plead for him before the tribunal of Jesus Christ. For he built one abbey, and dying bequeathed a sum of money to another." So grossly ignorant was this ingenious and valuable historian of the all-important

* Collier's Ecc. Vol. I.

article of justification by the merit of Jesus Christ alone, through faith ! It was the revival of this article, which subverted the foundation of the Roman religion at the time of the Reformation. For while men allow themselves to doubt of the sufficiency of Christ as a Saviour, so long as the conscience is harassed with doubts or perplexities, it will naturally betake itself to any superstitions which happen to prevail, in order to pacify the mind. And the popedom held out, by monastic institutions and a variety of other means, such a quantity of false reliefs to a guilty conscience, that even the shameless King John might seem to merit the kingdom of heaven by certain good works. M. Paris himself was entangled in the same nets of Pharisaical religion. So were the greater part of mankind throughout Europe at that time. We have seen, however, that the Waldenses could find peace and relief of conscience, and the expectation of heaven through Jesus Christ alone, by faith ; and hence, were enabled to despise the whole popedom, with all its appendages ; while others, who trembled in conscience for their sins, and knew not the holy wisdom of resting on Christ alone for salvation, might swell with indignation at the wickedness of the court of Rome, yet not dare to emancipate themselves from its bonds. It has been said by those who are willing to palliate the Romish abominations, that such a power as that of the pope was necessary at that time, to tame the ferocious spirits of men ; and that the power of the pope preserved some order in society. It may be allowed that it was a cement, but it was a cement of iniquity. Men were held by it in the bonds of superstition, and were even encouraged to live in wickedness, by false hopes of heaven. Such hopes did not sanctify but corrupt their minds : whereas the faith of Christ at once gives peace to the conscience, and leads it to true holiness.

To do justice to the real protestant character, which began with Claudius of Turin *, and at length produced the Reformation, it ought to be known, that the idolatry, the encouragement of sin, and the self-righteous superstitions, subversive of the real merit of Christ, and the grace of the Gospel, were no less flagrant in the popedom

* See Vol. II. Cent. IX. Chap. 3.

than they have been represented, and were understood to be by our fathers. Therefore, against some modern attempts to give a specious colour to the Roman abominations, it may be proper, in addition to what has already been stated, to give two authentic facts, which will not need much comment.

In the year 1234, Pope Gregory IX. willing to revive the cause of the eastern crusades, which, through a series of disastrous events, was now much on the decline; and feeling the connexion between this cause and the credit of the popedom, by a bull directed to all Christendom invited men to assume the cross, and proceed to the Holy Land. “Notwithstanding,” says he, “the ingratitude of Christians, the goodness of God is not withdrawn from them. His* providence is still actively engaged to promote the happiness of mankind: his remedies suit their temper; his prescriptions are proportioned to the disease.—The service to which they are now invited is an EFFECTUAL ATONEMENT for the miscarriages of a negligent life: the discipline of a regular penance would have discouraged many offenders so much, that they would have had no heart to venture upon it: but the HOLY WAR is a compendious method of discharging men from guilt, and restoring them to the Divine favour. Even if they die on their march, the intention will be taken for the deed, and many in this way may be crowned without fighting.”

Gregory IX.
invites men
to the
Crusades.

A. D. 1234.

As I have ventured to contradict some positions of Mosheim and other protestant writers, who seemed to me to date the gross corruptions of popedom too early, so the same regard for veracity, which is the capital quality of a real historian, requires me to bear witness to the strict truth of their representations of Romish evils, in the times in which they really did prevail. In opposition, therefore, to the glosses of those, who seem to maintain, that papal indulgences had no connexion with men's eternal state, but related only to their ecclesiastical privileges in this life, let it be submitted to the reader, whether every person who reads the bull of Gregory IX. must not have understood,

Corruptions of
the Popedom.

* Collier's Ecc. Vol. I.

Gregory's bull
absolved men
from guilt.

that he pretended in the name of God to absolve crusaders from real guilt, and to ensure to them the kingdom of heaven : whether he did not in effect oppose the doctrine of the atonement of Christ, and teach men to ground their justification from God, in contempt of that atonement, on the merit of the performance of the military service, which he enjoined. It is easy to multiply futile distinctions ; but to what purpose are they introduced at all, when the obvious practical sense of the bull could only be that which I have mentioned, when it was so understood, and when it induced men to act with such hopes and views as have been stated ?

Indeed while severe penances had been in repute, and men were in the habit of submitting to undergo them, the atonement of Christ had long been rendered in effect insignificant ; and self-righteous prospects of the Divine favour had been encouraged throughout the Christian world. But the evil was now multiplied exceedingly.

The Doctrine
of Penances.

The additional doctrine of commutation for penances, while it removed the mind still farther from the faith of Christ, and fixed its dependence more strongly on the popedom, opened the floodgates of wickedness and vice, taught men to gratify every disposition of corrupt nature, and to believe such gratifications consistent with a prospect of gaining the Divine favour. It is then to no purpose for men to declaim with Matt. Paris against the corruptions of this or that pope, while with him they maintain the self-righteous principle of popery itself. Evils of the worst kind must prevail, while we think ourselves capable of making atonement for our sins by any kind of works whatever. Let us learn the true humility and the genuine faith of the Gospel, which works by the love of God and man ; and then the practical evils will vanish for want of a foundation. Protestants will always have a strong temptation to embrace some self-righteous notions, as those of Popery or Socinianism, or perhaps they may ultimately have recourse to Atheism itself, when they neglect the real peculiarity of Christianity. These considerations merit a very serious attention : they evince the importance of the REFORMATION, and illustrate the nature of its fundamental principles.

The other fact, which demonstrates the genuine character of the religion which predominated in Europe, I have extracted from a work lately published*. John Maryns was abbot of St. Alban's about the end of the thirteenth century, whose dying words are recorded to have been to this effect: "O holy Alban, whom I have loved and addressed as my best aid! as I have existed and lived by thy help, so, O glorious Saint! defend me from the pains of hell." Who this same Alban was, or whether he ever existed at all, are questions not easily answered, nor is it material to our purpose to inquire whether he was a real or a fictitious saint; but it is evident that John Maryns, by a solemn act of worship, placed the same confidence in him, which Stephen did in Jesus Christ, when he committed his departing spirit into his hands. The distinctions, it seems, insisted on by the Papists, between the higher and inferior kinds of worship, are futile evasions. Serious worshippers of their communion practically opposed the fundamental maxim of Christianity. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man †." The devotions of Maryns were perfectly analogous to those then in fashion. The idolatry of the Romish communion is evident; and, when the reader recollects what has been said of the doctrines of the Waldenses, he will see how far their representations of Antichrist are founded in fact.

That the ecclesiastical powers in these miserable times were not at all inclined to promote piety and virtue among their subjects, but that they studied chiefly their secular emoluments, appears from numberless evidences in this century. Let it suffice in this place to mention two. First, the Franciscans and Dominicans were employed in enlisting men into the service of the crusades by Gregory IX. the author of the impious bull mentioned above. They engaged in the business with much ardour: and as it often happened that persons, who in the warmth of zeal had taken the Cross, repented afterwards, when they began to think seriously of the difficulties of the enterprize, these friars were employed to release such

* History of the Abbey of Saint Alban's, by Newcombe, page 203.

† 1 Tim. ii. 5.

devotees from their vows, on the payment of a fine. It may easily be conceived, that much wealth would be amassed by this dispensing power*. Secondly, In 1242, Provisional bull of Innocent IV. A.D. 1242. Innocent IV. sent a provisional bull to king Henry III. of England, which informed him, that if he should happen to lay violent hands on an ecclesiastic, and to fall under the censure of the canons, he might be absolved on submitting to the customary penance†!

At this time, during the prevalence of the Aristotelian philosophy, the doctrine of “grace of congruity” was in high repute: in other words, justification by Grace of Congruity. men’s own works, was insisted on: and while some decent show of respect was paid in words to the merits of Christ, the real meritorious objects, on which men were taught to place their hope, were some performances, by which they might, in a lower sense, DESERVE grace, and purchase the application of it to themselves‡. Thus, a religion prevailed, which accommodated all sorts of sinners. Those of a more decent cast were taught to expect the Divine favour by their own works, which deserved grace of congruity; and the most scandalous transgressors, by the doctrine of commutation for offences, might still obtain forgiveness: the exercise of munificence towards the hierarchy was sure to cover all crimes; but the humble and the contrite alone, who felt what sin is, and sighed for a remedy, found no relief to consciences, which could not admit the delusive refreshments provided by the papacy. These, either mourned in secret, and poured out their souls to that God, who says to his creatures, “seek and ye shall find,” or if they united themselves in a body of faithful people, maintained the character of those, “of whom the world was not worthy,” and suffered the extremities of persecution, under the name of Waldenses.

The Scripture in all this time was neglected: the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue was in a great measure lost; and, as if the prince of darkness, through the medium of ignorance and superstition, had not sufficiently blinded

* Collier, Vol. I.

† Ibid.

‡ Thirteenth Article of the Church of England.

the minds of men in religious concerns, even the learning itself, which was reviving, became a powerful instrument of augmenting the general obscurity. For the schoolmen, admitting no first principles, reasoned on every subject, and thus involved every religious notion in sceptical intricacy. The word of God was not appealed to, but Aristotle and the fathers were considered as decisive*.

That sophistical kind of learning, which Roger Bacon censured, was thriving throughout all this period. And in 1252 the college of divines at Paris, called Sorbonne, was erected by Robert De Sorbonne, Institution of the Sorbonne at Paris. a particular friend of Lewis IX. † A. D. 1252.

With what difficulties men, who truly feared God, in Europe at that day, had to grapple in working out their salvation, is abundantly evident from this review. Not even nobility of rank could secure such persons from the horrors of persecution. Some noblemen in Alsace had dared to reprehend the conduct of Innocent III. particularly his imposition of celibacy on the clergy. The bishops of that country had influence enough to oppress these innovators; and, in one day, they burnt in the flames a hundred of them or their associates. Individuals, however, there doubtless were, who, having no opportunity of Christian fellowship, worshipped God in secret, and found that UNCTION FROM THE HOLY ONE WHICH TEACHETH ALL THINGS ‡.

Of the Eastern Churches scarcely any thing worthy of relation occurs: yet it may be proper to mention, that in the year 1299, Othman, in the East, was proclaimed sultan, and founded a new empire. Othman proclaimed Sultan, A. D. 1299. The people afterwards as well as the emperor, were called after his name. The mixed multitude, of which this people was composed, were the remains of four sultanies which had for some time subsisted in the neighbourhood of the river Euphrates. Thus, the four angels, which were bound in Euphrates, were loosed, and under the name of TURKS succeeded the Saracens both in the propagation of Mahometanism, and in diffusing the horrors of war§. Providence had destined

* Preface to 13 Cent. Magdeburgh.

† Mosheim, 13 Cent. Pars. ii. cap. i. sect. 3.

‡ 1 John ii. 27.

§ Rev. ix.—Newton, 3d Vol. Prophecies, page 116.

them to scourge the people of Europe for their idolatry and flagitiousness ; and Europe still repented not. But the Divine prophecies were fulfilled—and “he may run that readeth.”

CHAP. VI.

AUTHORS AND EMINENT PERSONS IN THIS CENTURY.

ON the subject of the propagation of the Gospel, scarce any thing occurs in this age. The godly spirit of missionaries, which had been the glory of the declining Church, was by this time exhausted ; so extensively had the papal corruptions prevailed. The only accession to the Christian name in Europe seems to have been the conversion, as it is called, of the Prussians, Lithuanians, and some adjoining provinces.

Prussia was one of the last regions of the North, which bowed under the yoke of the popedom. The ignorance, brutality, and ferocity of the inhabitants, were uncommonly great. The Teutonic knights, after they had lost their possessions in Palestine, took the cross against the Prussians, and, after a long and bloody war, forced them to receive the name of Christ ; but I know no evidences of piety, either in the missionaries or in the proselytes. The destruction, however, of the old idolatry, and the introduction of something of Christianity, would eventually, at least, prove a blessing to this people.

Arsenius, bishop of Constantinople, will deserve a place in these memoirs. After that Constantinople was taken by the French and Venetians, the seat of the Greek empire had been transferred to Nice in Bithynia, of which metropolis, under the reign of Theodorus Lascaris, Arsenius was appointed bishop. He was renowned for piety and simplicity, and had lived a monastic life near Apollonia. Theodorus, a little before his death, constituted him one of the guardians of his son John, an infant in the sixth year of his age. But the integrity and virtue of the bishop were no security against the ambition and perfidy of the times. Michael Palæologus usurped the sovereignty ; and Ar-

Arsenius,
bishop of Con-
stantinople.

senius at length, with reluctance, overpowered by the influence of the nobility, consented to place the diadem on his head, with this express condition, that he should resign the empire to the royal infant when he should come to maturity.

Arsenius, after he had made this concession, had the mortification to find his pupil treated with perfect disregard ; and, probably, repenting of what he had done, he retired from his See to a monastery. Some time after, by a sudden revolution, Palæologus recovered Constantinople from the Latins ; but amidst all his successes, he found it necessary to his reputation to recal the bishop, and he fixed him in the metropolitan See. So great was the ascendancy of the character of a virtuous prelate over the politics of an unprincipled usurper, though covered with secular glory ! Palæologus, however, still dreaded the youth, whom he had so deeply injured, and to prevent him from recovering the throne, he had recourse to the barbarous policy of putting out his eyes. Arsenius hearing this, excommunicated the emperor, who then made some pretences of repentance. But the bishop refused to admit him into the Church ; and Palæologus had the baseness to accuse him of certain crimes before an assembly of priests. Arsenius was convened before the venal assembly, condemned, and banished to a small island of the Propontis. But, conscious of his integrity, he bore his sufferings with serenity and composure ; and, requesting that an account might be taken of the treasures of the Church, he showed that three pieces of gold, which he had earned by transcribing Psalms, were the whole of his property. This same emperor, who had the meanness, by false accusation, to expel Arsenius from his See, still confessed, how much wickedness stands in awe of virtue, by soliciting him to repeal his ecclesiastical censures. The deprived prelate, however, who never had been fond of sacerdotal dignity, remained content with his obscurity, and, to his last breath, refused the request of the usurper, who still retained the wages of his iniquity*.

Gibbon relates this story with no material variation from the account, which I have given. But, in his usual

* Cent. Magd. 461. Nicephones.

Prejudice of Gibbon. manner, he ridicules and scoffs at the virtuous patriarch, and ascribes his professions of disinterestedness to sullenness and vain-glory. How must an ecclesiastic conduct himself, in order to procure the approbation of this historian? If the Christian hero before us (for he seems to have truly feared God) had flattered and gratified the usurper in all his desires and demands, we should then have heard of his hypocrisy and ambition. Now that he voluntarily descends from a state of grandeur, to poverty, disgrace, and exile, for the sake of a good conscience, he must be suspected of sullenness and pride. But by their fruits men are to be known; and, by them, so far as they appear in this case, we may form a judgment of Arsenius, of Palæologus, and of Gibbon.

We have given an instance of a bishop in the East, who feared God. Let us now behold a similar instance of uprightness in a bishop of the West. John Scot, an upright Bishop. A. D. 1202. Scot, bishop of Dunkeld, died in the year 1202. He was an Englishman, who had been archdeacon of St. Andrew's, and thence was preferred to the See*. He was conspicuous in that corrupt age for pastoral vigilance and a conscientious conduct. The county of Argyle was part of his diocese, and, in that county, the people understood only the Irish tongue. Scot, unwilling to receive emoluments from a people, whose souls he could not edify, wrote to pope Clement III. desiring him to constitute Argyle a separate See, and to confer the bishopric on Evaldus his chaplain, who was well qualified for the purpose, and could speak Irish. "How," says he, "can I give a comfortable account to the Judge of the world at the last day, if I pretend to teach those, who cannot understand me? The revenues suffice for two bishops, if we are content with a competency, and are not prodigal of the patrimony of Christ. It is better to lessen the charge, and increase the number of labourers in the Lord's vineyard." His whole request was granted; but the election appears not to have been made till the year 1200. Clement the Third died in 1191. Sentiments such as

Death of
Clem. III.
A. D. 1191.

* Collier, Vol. I. page 411.

these would have done honour to the purest ages. It seemed worth while to give some illustration to the opinion of the Waldenses, "who professed that there were pious men, who lived in Babylon;" and John Scot deserves to be regarded as a practical teacher of bishops and pastors in all ages.

Great Britain furnishes us with a similar instance. Seval, archbishop of York, wrote to pope Alexander IV. against his violent and oppressive conduct, and exhorted him to follow Peter,—to feed, not to devour, the sheep of Christ. The particular occasion of this letter was, that the pope had intruded a person named Jordan into the deanery of York*. The courage and integrity of Seval enraged the pope, who, on some pretence, excommunicated him: he still however persisted, and withstood the intrusion of unworthy clergymen. The Romanists harassed him with their utmost malevolence; but he was honoured by the people. He died in 1258, in the fourth year of his archbishopric, of which he seems to have kept possession till his decease.

Death of
Seval, arch-
bishop of
York.

A. D. 1258.

Henry of Gaunt, archdeacon of Tournay, called "the famous Teacher," wrote against ecclesiastical abuses: he maintained, that a prelate was subject to law, was no lord, and that evil became not good because the pope commanded or permitted it†.

William de St. Amour, doctor of the Sorbonne, and professor of divinity in the university of Paris, was one of the greatest ornaments of Christianity, which appeared in the Roman communion in this century. He had his name from St. Amour in Franche Compte, the place of his nativity. The mendicant orders seldom met with a more vigorous and able adversary. The Dominicans in particular seemed desirous to engross all the power and influence of the university to themselves, while the doctors, resisting their unjust encroachments, excluded them from their society. In the year 1255 the debate was brought before pope Alexander IV. who, with intolerable arrogance, ordered the university not only to restore the Dominicans to their

Courage
and piety
of William
St. Amour.

A. D. 1255.

* Cent. Magd. XIII. page 550.

† Collier.

former station, but also to grant them as many professorships as they should require*. Thus the friars not only intruded themselves into the dioceses and churches of the bishops and clergy, and, by the sale of indulgences, and a variety of scandalous exactions, perverted whatever of good order and discipline remained in the Church, but also began to domineer over the seminaries of learning. And, in all this, as the pope was the principal leader, a despotism of the very worst nature was growing stronger and stronger in Christendom. The doctors of the university of Paris now loudly joined in the cry of the secular clergy against the invasions of the mendicants; and indeed the papal power at this time ruled with absolute dominion. No pastor of a church could maintain any due authority over the laity, if a Franciscan or Dominican appeared in his parish to sell indulgences, and to receive confessions; and the most learned body of men at that time in Europe, were now subject to the government of those agents of popedom. The magistrates of Paris, at first, were disposed to protect the university; but the terror of the papal edicts reduced them at length to silence; and not only the Dominicans, but also the Franciscans, assumed whatever power they pleased in that famous seminary, and knew no other restrictions, except what the Roman tyrant imposed upon them.

The genius and spirit of St. Amour were remarkably distinguished in this controversy. He wrote several treatises against the mendicant orders, and particularly a book published in the year 1255, concerning the perils of the latter days. Persuaded as he was that St. Paul's prophecy of the latter times† was fulfilling in the abominations of the friars, he laid down thirty-nine marks of false teachers. He might have reduced them to a much smaller number; for, unavoidably, many of his marks will involve and imply one another. He exposes, however, with much discernment and perspicuity, the selfishness, hypocrisy, flattery, and sordid artifices of the friars: he particularly inveighs against their intrusion into the folds of other pastors, and their

* In this brief account of St. Amour, I have endeavoured to give the substance of the information contained in the Centuriators, in Du Pin, Mosheim, and Fox the Martyrologist.

† 2 Tim. iii. 1.

attempts to alienate the affections of the flock from their lawful teachers. An unworthy practice too common even in the best times of the church!—and which, from the love of novelty and the instability so natural to mankind, has ever found but too much encouragement! St. Amour takes notice of this sort of opposition which St. Paul met with at Corinth, and shows that it is the mark of a true pastor, not to be fond of building on another man's foundation, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand*. This was to strike directly at the particular practices of the mendicants; who were also remarkably active in engaging the laity to enrich their orders, and omitted no methods to amplify their possessions. St. Amour, with a discernment remarkably keen for these times, explains our Saviour's precepts concerning the selling of what a man has, and the giving of it to the poor, showing that the inward affection and practical preference in all cases of competition, are the things which Christ meant to inculcate, not the literally parting with all our property, of which generosity hypocrites boasted much.

A few years before the unrighteous decision of the pope in favour of the friars, a fanatical book, under the title of "Introduction to the Everlasting Gospel," was published by a Franciscan, which, by exalting Francis above Jesus Christ, and arrogating to his order the glory of reforming mankind by a new Gospel substituted in the room of that of Christ, attempted to exalt that mendicant tribe to the height of divine estimation in the eyes of mankind. The universal ferment excited by this impious book, obliged Alexander IV. to suppress it in the year 1255, and he ordered it to be burnt in secret, willing to spare the reputation of the mendicants. But the university of Paris, which in the same year, received that grievous injury from the pontiff, which has been mentioned, insisted upon a public condemnation of the book, and Alexander, mighty as he was in power, was constrained, for once, to give way to the feelings of mankind; and he publicly committed the Franciscan's performance to the flames. The next year, however, he re

* 2 Cor. x. 16.

venge himself on St. Amour, by ordering his book on the perils of the latter days to be also committed to the flames, and by banishing him out of France. The persecuted champion retired into Franche Compté, the place of his birth; but, under the pontificate of Clement IV. he returned to the metropolis, wrote against the abuses of popery with persevering ardour, and died esteemed and regretted by all in the Roman church, who retained any regard for Christian truth and piety. This seems the substance of all that is known concerning this extraordinary personage, who only wanted a more favourable soil, in which he might bring to maturity the fruits of those protestant principles, the seeds of which he nourished in his breast.

John* de Poliaco, a disciple of St Amour, trode in the steps of his master, and insisted on the rights of the parochial clergy to hear the confessions of the laity, and condemned the general license of discharging that function, which the pope gave to the mendicant orders. Both parties seemed involved in the superstition of auricular confession; but the mendicants evidently transgressed the bounds of justice. It may, perhaps, be doubted, what was the real character of John: this, however, is certain,—He was condemned by papal authority in the year 1277.

Francis of Assisium, founder of the Minor Friars, was doubtless an extraordinary character. He was born at Assisium, in the ecclesiastical state, and was disinherited by his father, who was disgusted at his enthusiasm. In 1209† he founded his order, which was but too successful in the world. His practices of devotion were monstrous, and he seems ever to have been the prey of a whimsical imagination. Pride and deceit are not uncommonly connected with a temper like his, and he gave a memorable instance of both. It is certain that he was impressed with five wounds on his body, resembling the wounds of Christ crucified. It is certain also, that he pretended to have received the impression as a miraculous favour from heaven. To describe the particulars of such a story,

Condemnation of John de Poliaco.
A. D. 1277.

The Minor Friars founded.

A. D. 1209.

* Magd. Cent. 13.

† Alban Butler.

would be to descend beneath the dignity of history. Let it suffice to have mentioned in general what is authentic, whence the reader may form some notion of the truth of St. Paul's prediction concerning the man whose coming was to be after the working of Satan with lying wonders*. The papacy indeed was full of such figments at this time. Francis sought for glory among men by his follies and absurdities, and he found the genius of the age so adapted to his own, that he gained immense admiration and applause. He died in 1226, in the forty-fifth year of his age†. Posterity saw his order splendid in secular greatness, though under the mask of poverty; and we have already recounted the dreams of one of his disciples, who was no mean imitator of his master‡. The serious and intelligent follower of Jesus will not be staggered at such disgusting counterfeits of Christian virtue. He will recognize in them the hand of Satan, deluding with fictitious holiness men, who had despised that holiness which was genuine. And thus they, who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness, were justly given over to diabolical infatuations§. Nothing has happened but according to scriptural revelation; and the duty of humbly and seriously attending to the divine oracles, as our true wisdom and felicity, is made evident.

Their
Founder
died,
A. D. 1226.

Let us dwell a moment on his contemporary, Dominic, the founder of the Dominicans. He was a Spaniard, born in the year 1170. In fictitious miracles and monstrous austerities he resembled Francis||. We have seen how he laboured among the Waldenses. Butler observes, that he had no hand in the cruelties of the crusades, and asserts, that he was not connected with the inquisition; though he owns that the project of this court was first formed in a council of Toulouse in 1229, and that in 1233 two Dominican friars were the first inquisitors. Let us exercise as much candour as possible on a subject very much controverted, and admit with a learned historian¶, that Dominic was an inqui-

Dominicans
founded,
A. D. 1170.

The first
inquisitors
were two
Dominican
friars.
A. D. 1233.

* 2 Thess. ii. 9.

† Alban Butler, Vol. X.—Cave, Vol. I. page 704.

‡ Viz. The author of "Introduction to the Everlasting Gospel." See p. 171. § 2 Thess. ii. || Butler, Vol. VIII. ¶ Mosheim, Vol. I. p. 698.

sitor, but not in the most offensive sense of the word. Let it be remembered, however, that candour is due also to the Waldenses, whom the learned Roman Catholic, to whose industry I am repeatedly obliged, describes, from Le Gendre's history of France, as a combination of shocking banditti, and whom he accuses of holding the unlawfulness of oaths, and of putting men to death. These charges have been sufficiently confuted by what we have seen from their own memoirs. The biographer, who found it so very easy to acquit Dominic, should not have condemned the Waldenses on such erroneous information.

Butler also commends the piety of Simon Montfort, the persecutor of the Albigenses, and the father of the famous malcontent earl of Leicester, who flourished in the reign of king Henry III.—And though he condemns the barbarities of the crusades, he represents the Waldenses as the enemies of public peace, and the laws of civil society. In this the learned author speaks against the concurrent testimony of the princes under whom they lived, and who owned them to be the best of subjects.

To return to Dominic. He seems to have shown no one evidence of genuine humility, or of evangelical piety. In religious pride he lived; and, it is much to be feared, he died in the same temper and in the greatest ignorance. For in his last hours he promised his brethren, that he would never forget them, when he was gone to God. If persons, who inquire into the nature of true religion, examined with more precision the true marks of pride on the one hand, and of humility on the other, they would not be so easily imposed on by false pretensions.

This same Dominic constituted the Rosary, or the Psalter of the Virgin Mary. To illustrate this subject, which, though egregiously trifling in its own nature, deserves a few moments consideration, as tending to give a just view of the religious taste then in fashion, it is to be observed, that the old Anchorets counted the number of their prayers by grains, or such like marks*. Those who could not read, nor recite the Psalter by heart, supplied that deficiency by repeating the Lord's prayer. And thus, illiterate persons, at canonical hours, performed

* Butler, Vol. X.

devotions corresponding to those of the Psalter recited by the clergy and others; and they were taught, no doubt, that their simple performances would be equally meritorious with the religious exercises of the more learned. On these principles Pater-nosters were counted by the studs of the belts; and Peter the Hermit, famous for promoting the first crusades, instructed the illiterate laity to say a number of Pater-nosters and Ave Mary's in lieu of each canonical hour of the church-offices. And thus, I imagine, he attempted to qualify his enthusiastic crusaders for the kingdom of heaven. But to Dominic the glory of completing the scheme of MECHANICAL devotion belongs. He directed men to recite fifteen decads of Hail Mary, &c. and one Pater-noster before each decad. Thus men were taught to repeat a hundred and fifty times the angel's salutation of the Virgin, interlarded with a number of Pater-nosters, and to believe that this practice would be as acceptable as the recital of the hundred and fifty Psalms. I suppose very zealous devotees would go through all this work at one time: perhaps others, less laborious, might perform it at successive intervals.—But is this the spirit of GRACE AND SUPPLICATION* promised to the Christian Church? Is this the spirit of adoption, whereby men cry Abba, Father? What is it but the spirit of bondage and miserable superstition, the religion of the lips, a self-righteous drudgery of so much devotional work, with a view to purchase the remission of sins, and to ease the consciences of men, who lived without either understanding the doctrines, or practising the precepts of Scripture?—Observe hence, with how much propriety the Waldenses, as we have seen, taught men the true nature of prayer; and, what a dreadful vacuum of all true piety was now the portion of nominal Christians, who had departed from the grace of Christ Jesus!

So powerful, however, is the genuine operation of the Divine Spirit, that it can purify a humble soul by faith in Christ, and exhibit a brief assemblage of Christian virtues, even in the gulf of superstition. This seems to have been the case with a great personage of this century,

* Zech. xii. 10.

Character of
Lewis IX. or
St. Lewis.

whose character deserves particular illustration. This was Louis IX. commonly called St. Lewis, the son of Lewis VIII. who invaded England in the reign of king John. His mother Blanche brought him up with much religious care*. "I love you, my son," said she, with all the tenderness of which a mother is capable; but I would infinitely rather see you fall dead at my feet, than that you should commit a mortal sin." Lewis felt the daily impression of this thought on his mind. In his minority, Blanche completed the reduction of the Albigenses, a dreadful work, which has already engaged our painful attention. How far Blanche herself might be imposed on by the slanders so copiously poured on the supposed heretics, it is not easy to say. As to Lewis, however, a minor, it may fairly be presumed, that he understood not the merits of the cause. As he grew up, his devotional spirit appeared consistently strong and equally fervent. He often invited men of a religious character to his table; and, when some objected to him, that he spent too much time at his devotions, he answered, "If that time were spent in hunting and gaming, I should not be so rigorously called to account for the employment of my vacant hours." He lived a life of self-denial: he banished from the court all diversions prejudicial to morals. No man, who broke the rules of decorum in conversation, could find admission into his presence. He frequently retired for the purpose of secret prayer. So comprehensive were the powers of his understanding, and so well qualified was he to excel in a variety of employments, that he, personally, administered justice to his subjects, with the greatest attention and impartiality. The effect was long remembered after his decease; and, those who were dissatisfied with the judicial processes of their own times, with a sigh expressed their wish, that justice might be administered as in the days of St. Lewis. Those, who were guilty of blasphemy, were, by his own order, marked on the lips, some say on the forehead, with a hot iron. A rich citizen of Paris was punished in this manner; and Lewis silenced the complaints of those, who murmured at his severity, by observing, that

* Alban Butler, Vol. VIII.

he would rather suffer punishment himself, than omit to inflict it on transgressors.

Uprightness and integrity have seldom more strongly marked the character of any prince, than they did that of Lewis. He suffered not the nobles to oppress their vassals; and the exercise of sovereign power was in his hands a blessing to mankind. A nobleman had hanged three children, for hunting rabbits: Lewis having investigated the fact, condemned him to capital punishment: a rare instance of the love of justice breaking through the forms of aristocratical oppression, which at that time domineered through Europe! It was not to be supposed, that the feudal lords would, without emotion, hear of a sentence so seldom pronounced on an offender of such rank. They earnestly interceded for the nobleman's life; and Lewis was so far prevailed on by the maxims of the times, as to mitigate the penalty. He, however, deprived the cruel oppressor of the greatest part of his estate.

Truth and sincerity seem to have pervaded the soul of Lewis. In all treaties and negociations he was conscientiously exact; and foreign states frequently referred matters of dispute to his arbitration. In him it appeared, that wisdom and truth, sound policy and Christian sincerity, are not at variance in the nature of things. And whatever disadvantages he might seem to undergo by a generous and disinterested conduct, he found them to be amply compensated by the respect and veneration attached to his character, and the confidence reposed in his justice by all mankind.

With great pleasure I dwell a little on a character, so singularly excellent. An elegant historian* observes, that "he united to the mean and abject superstition of a monk, the magnanimity of the hero, the integrity of the patriot, and the humanity of the philosopher."—So cautiously does he abstain from praising Christianity, even while he gives a warm encomium to a most upright Christian! All the notice which he deigns to give of his religious principles, is an insinuation, that they were mere monasticism. I confess, the superstition of the times had

* Hume, Vol. II. page 190.

deeply tinctured Lewis; and it is to be regretted, that his eminent station gave him not that access to the protestants of his own dominions, who in those days adorned the real Gospel of Christ, which might, under God, have emancipated his soul from papal bondage, and enabled him to shine with a salutary light among the very best of Christian princes. Disadvantageously situated as he was, he could only acquire and maintain the spirit of a Christian for himself: the whole tenor of his life demonstrated the sincerity of his Christian faith and love: but, enslaved by papal domination, he could not emancipate his subjects. It is certain, however, that mere superstition could never have inspired so steady and consistent a piety as that of Lewis; and it seems no less certain, that mere philosophy, in whatever sense we may suppose the historian to have used that vague and ill-defined term, was equally incompetent to produce such a character as that of this prince, the Christian, the man of faith, humility and prayer. Let us attend a little to the **FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT**, which sprang from Christian principles in this monarch; for the course of our history gives us very seldom an opportunity of illustrating the power of the Gospel in national and political transactions.

The weak and distracted government of our king Henry III. gave to Lewis frequent occasions of exercising that secular chicane, and that spirit of artful intrigue, in which mere statesmen abound. The English were divided among themselves, and Henry held the balance of power among them with a tremulous hand. But Lewis took no advantage of their divisions, nor attempted to expel them from their provinces, which they still held in France. John, the father of Henry, by a sentence of attainder, seconded by the arms of Philip Augustus, the grandfather of Lewis, had been deprived of Normandy, and some other provinces in France. Lewis had scruples of conscience, that affected his mind, in regard to the detention of those provinces, which had fallen to him by way of inheritance. He even expressed some intention of restoring them, and was only prevented by reflecting on the justice of punishing John, as a felon and a murderer, who had barbarously slain his nephew prince

Arthur.—He never interposed in English affairs, but with an intention to compose the differences between the king and his nobility; he recommended every healing measure to both parties; and exerted himself with all his might, to bring to a sense of his duty the earl of Leicester, that same enterprising rebel, who, after a series of splendid crimes, was at last defeated and slain by Edward, Prince of Wales, the son of king Henry. He made a treaty with England, at a time when the affairs of the kingdom were at the lowest ebb: but took no advantage of his own superior situation in the terms of the treaty. He made some liberal concessions: he ensured to Henry the peaceable possession of Guienne; and only required him to cede Normandy, and his other provinces, which he had no prospect of ever regaining. Afterwards, when by a rare instance of confidence, the king of England and his barons agreed to refer the settlement of their differences to Lewis, that equitable monarch decided in a manner, which showed his equal regard to the prerogatives of the crown and the rights of the people.

In his days, Gingis Kan, the Tartar, threatened to deluge Europe by his victorious arms. The consternation was general: but, Lewis said to his mother, “What have we to fear? we shall either live conquerors, or die martyrs.”

The spirit of the crusades was adapted to the superstitious habits of Lewis, and he fell into the snare. From this quarter alone he, who in other respects was the father and friend of his people, was unhappily led into a conduct prejudicial to society. Having been brought to the brink of the grave by an illness in 1244, when he was beginning to recover he took the vow of the Cross; and as soon as he was able, raised an army and made an expedition into the Holy Land. Before his departure, he took care to make large restitution for injuries inadvertently committed throughout the kingdom; he took the most exact care of the morals of his soldiers, so far as he had opportunity and ability; and, in the whole course of his military measures, avoided the unnecessary effusion of blood, by saving the life of every infidel, whom he could take prisoner. It is a de-

Lewis IX.
goes to the
Holy Land,
A. D. 1244.

plorable instance of the power of the “god of this world *” over our fallen race, that a monarch of so much good sense, and of so great virtue and piety, could yet be engaged in a cause so imprudent and chimerical. Good men, however, will act a consistent part even where they are evidently mistaken in their object. Lewis was still the same man; and the fear of God was his predominant principle of action. Let civil history relate his military prowess, the efforts of his prodigious valour, and the series of his calamities. When he was taken prisoner by the Saracens, and was menaced with death, he behaved with his usual fortitude, and concern for his soldiers. At length, being ransomed, he visited Palestine. Hearing of the death of his mother Blanche, he discovered much filial tenderness on the occasion. As he returned to Europe after a disastrous expedition, three sermons were preached every week on board his ship; and the sailors and soldiers were catechised and instructed, Lewis bearing a part in all the religious offices. He returned to Paris after an absence of almost six years. Here he was visited by our Henry III. to whom he said, “I think myself more happy that God hath given me patience in suffering, than if I had conquered the world.” We are told, that many Saracens, induced by his piety, received Christian baptism; and that he sent two monks to preach to the Tartars:—but the vices of Christians were so flagrant, as to defeat all these good intentions.

Devoted as Lewis was to the popedom, he could not but see the enormous ecclesiastical abuses, which at that time prevailed. He, therefore, made laws against papal encroachments, and against simony; and prohibited the rapines of the Romish pontiff by an edict, in which he expresses himself to this effect; “the exactions and heavy impositions of money, imposed on our kingdom by the court of Rome, through which our territories are miserably impoverished, we will not suffer to be collected †.” Words were no empty sounds with a prince of his steadiness and fortitude; and, by the vigour and wisdom of his administration, France seems to have been much exempted from that intolerable oppression of the

* 2 Cor. iv. 4.

† Cent. Magd. XIII. 329.

Roman tyrant, under which England at that time groaned. But Lewis undertook a second crusade, laid siege to Tunis on the coast of Africa, and died before that city. On the approach of death, he gave very salutary advice to Philip his eldest son. "Avoid wars," says he, "with Christians, and spare the innocent subjects of your enemy. Discountenance blasphemy, games of chance, drunkenness, and impurity. Lay no heavy burdens on your subjects. I pray our Lord Jesus Christ to strengthen you in his service, and always to increase his grace in you; and I beg that we may together see, praise, and honour him to eternity. Suffer patiently; being persuaded that you deserve much more punishment for your sins; and then tribulation will be your gain. Love and converse with the godly: banish the vicious from your company: delight to hear profitable sermons: wherever you are, permit none, in your presence, to deal in slanderous or indecent conversation. Hear the poor with patience: and where your own interest is concerned, stand for your adversary against yourself, till the truth appear." As Lewis grew more feeble, he desired no mention whatever to be made to him of temporal things; and scarcely spake at all, except to his confessor. He prayed with tears for the conversion of infidels and sinners; and besought God, that his army might have a safe retreat, lest through weakness of the flesh, they should deny Christ. He repeated aloud, "Lord, I will enter into thine house; I will worship in thy holy temple, and give glory to thy name. Into thy hands I commend my spirit." These were his last words; and he breathed out his soul in the year 1270, aged fifty-five years. In better times, and with clearer evangelical light, what might not have been expected from such a character? We have seen the most abject superstition combined with the most dignified uprightness. We have seen Christianity, degenerated indeed and disgraced with superstition, but still amiable and fruitful in good works; and in such good works, as no man of mere secular wisdom could ever pretend to. The character and fundamental truths of Jesus, exhibited to a mind like that of Lewis, humble and contrite through divine influence, a rare and an attractive assemblage of

His death,
A. D. 1270.

virtues. However he by no means rested in a bare approbation of holy doctrine and holy practice. One may challenge the most bigoted admirer of modern French philosophy and French republicanism, to produce a single person, who has taken an active part in the late revolutions of that infatuated nation, that can at all be compared to this prince, in sincerity, philanthropy, and modesty.

This century saw also a pope, who deserves to be commemorated in the annals of the Church of Christ. Peter

Peter Celestine born, Celestine was* born in Apulia, about the year 1215, and lived as a hermit in a little cell. He

A. D. 1215. was admitted into holy orders; but after that, he lived five years in a cave on Mount Morroni, near Sulmona. He was molested with internal temptations, which his confessor told him were a stratagem of the enemy, that would not hurt him, if he despised it. He founded a monastery at Mount Morroni, in 1274. The See of Rome having been vacant two years and three months, Celestine was unanimously chosen pope on account of the fame of his sanctity. The Archbishop of Lyons†, presenting him with the instrument of his election, conjured him to submit to the vocation. Peter, in astonishment, prostrated himself on the ground; and, after he had continued in prayer a considerable time, he rose up, and fearing to oppose the will of God, he consented to his election, and took the name of Celestine V.

Since the days of the first Gregory, no pope had ever assumed the pontifical dignity with more purity of intention. But he had not Gregory's talents for business and government; and the Roman See was immensely more corrupt in the thirteenth than it was in the sixth century.—Celestine soon became sensible of his incapacity: he was lost, as in a wilderness. He attempted to reform abuses, to retrench the luxury of the clergy; to do, in short, what he found totally impracticable. He committed mistakes and exposed himself to the ridicule of the scornful. His conscience was kept on the rack through a variety of scruples, from which he could not extricate himself; and, from his ignorance of the world, and of canon-law, he began to think he had done wrong in ac-

* Butler, Vol. V.

† Vertot's Knights of Malta, Vol. II.

cepting the office. He spent much of his time in retirement: nor was he easy there, because his conscience told him, that he ought to be discharging the pastoral office. Overcome with anxiety, he asked Cardinal Cajetan, whether he might not abdicate? It was answered, yes. Celestine gladly embraced the opportunity of assuming again the character of brother Peter, after he had been distressed with the phantom of dignity for four or five months. He abdicated in 1294. Abdication of Celestine; A.D. 1294. The last act of his pontificate was worthy of the sincerity of his character. He made a constitution, that the pontiff might be allowed to abdicate, if he pleased*. It is remarkable, that no pope, since that time, has taken the benefit of this constitution.

That same Cajetan, who had, in effect, encouraged his resignation, contrived to be elected his successor, and took the name of Boniface VIII. Though Peter had given the most undoubted proofs of his love of obscurity, and desired nothing more than that he might spend the rest of his days in private devotion, yet Boniface, who measured other men by himself, apprehended and imprisoned him, lest he should revoke his resignation. Peter gave such proofs of sincerity, as convinced all persons, except Boniface himself, that nothing was to be dreaded from his ambition. The tyrant sent him into the castle of Fumone, under a guard of soldiers: the old hermit was shut up in a hideous dungeon; and his rest was interrupted by the jailors, who nightly disturbed his sleep. These insults and hardships he seems to have borne with Christian patience and meekness. He sent this message to Boniface, "I am content; I desired a cell, and a cell you have given me." But AMBITION IS MADE OF STERNER STUFF, than to yield to the suggestions of conscience or humanity. In the year 1296, after an imprisonment of ten months, Celestine died of a fever, most probably contracted by the unworthy treatment which he received. Celestine dies, A.D. 1296.

I have now mentioned the principal facts recorded concerning Celestine. There are no memorials of the internal exercises of his mind, but the discerning reader

* Platina.

will be apt to rank him with those of whom “the world was not worthy*.” After his decease the hypocritical Boniface, and all the cardinals, attended his obsequies at St. Peter’s. This is that Boniface, whose crimes disgraced the end of this century, and the beginning of the next: of whom it is said, that he entered the pontificate as a fox, lived as a lion, and died as a dog: and who, having tormented the Christian world for eight years, met at length with a punishment worthy of his crimes, dying in prison under the greatest agonies. This same man also published a decretal, “that the Roman pontiff ought to be judged by none, though, by his conduct, he drew innumerable souls with himself to hell!”

Thomas Aquinas, called, “the angelical doctor,” filled the Christian world in this century, with the renown of his name. He was a Dominican, who, by his comments on four books of Peter Lombard, master of the sentences, and, particularly, by his expositions of Aristotle, made himself more famous than most men of that time, on account of his skill in scholastic divinity. His penetration and genius were of the first order; but he excelled in that subtle and abstruse kind of learning only, which was better calculated to strike the imagination, than to improve the understanding. He maintained what is commonly called the doctrine of free-will, though he largely quoted Augustine, and retailed many of his pious and devotional sentiments. His Aristotelian subtleties enabled him to give a specious colour to the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation, which in him found a vehement defender. The new festival of the body of Christ was, by this divine, adorned with an idolatrous ritual, which strengthened the fashionable superstitions†. He was the great supporter of the doctrine of supererogation, which, at the same time that it established the most pernicious views of self-righteousness, by leaving the disposal of the superfluous treasure of the merits of saints to

Thomas
Aquinas, a
Dominican of
Naples,
A. D. 1243.

* Heb. xi. 38.

† I have consulted the Centuriators, Mosheim, Du Pin, and Butler, concerning the tenets and writings of this doctor, and, on the whole, can find but little matter, which may properly belong to this history.—A similar observation may be made concerning Bonaventura.

the discretion of the papal see, added one strong link to the chain, which dragged the nations into ecclesiastical slavery. Nor were his voluminous writings much calculated to instruct mankind. For he supposed, that whatever sense any passage of Scripture could, possibly, admit in grammatical construction, it was the real sense intended by the Holy Spirit: whence the imaginations of every sportive genius were regarded as of divine authority. And thus the Scriptures were perverted and exposed to the ridicule of profane minds. Nor were they rescued from this miserable abuse, till the æra of the Reformation. His sentiments on the all-important doctrine of justification, were deplorably corrupt; and that “*good works deserve grace of congruity,” was one of his favourite axioms. His notions of the nature of repentance were egregiously trifling. On the other hand, there are in his writings, and particularly in the account of his discourses during his last sickness, traces of great devotion, and a strain of piety very similar to that of Augustine. But I confess, that interlarded as they are with Romish idolatry, and an unbounded attachment to the pope as the infallible guide of the Church, I feel no inclination to transcribe them; because I am thoroughly convinced of the frauds by which the Dominicans supported the popedom; and because some glare of solemn devotion seemed necessary to be employed by the agents of that See, in order to maintain the reputation of a system intolerably corrupt.—The works of Aquinas were printed at Rome in seventeen volumes folio, A. D. 1570.

Bonaventura, a Franciscan doctor, may be briefly dismissed with similar observations. He also held the same corrupt sentiments concerning justification, with Thomas Aquinas. Nor does there appear in the whole Roman Church, in this century, a single divine, who could give to a serious inquirer the scriptural answer to the question, “What shall I do to be saved†?” Hence all, who felt trouble of con-

Bonaventura
became a
Franciscan,
A.D. 1243.

* See Article XIII. of the Church of England. The peculiar care with which the Church of England protects the great doctrine of justification, merits the attention of every sincere member of our Establishment.—The dangerous notion of meriting grace of congruity, implies a world of mischief.

† Acts, xvi. 30, 31.

science, were led to betake themselves to salvos with which the blind leaders of the blind supplied them.— Among these the delusive invention of purgatory was the most remarkable; and in the Romish Church it upholds its credit to this day. Before the true Scripture doctrine of justification it cannot stand for a moment; and whoever applies this doctrine with unfeigned faith to a guilty conscience, such a one will find relief, and will be led into the paths of true peace and genuine holiness. He may, indeed, and ought to pity those who are deluded by so unscriptural and superstitious a notion as that of purgatory, but he himself will never be led captive by it. It may be worth while to state the reasons on which the advocates of the papacy support the doctrine of purgatory, in their own words*. “Some part of the debt which the penitent owes to the divine justice, may remain uncanceled. Certainly some sins are venial, which deserve not eternal death; yet, if not effaced by condign penance in this world, they must be punished in the next. The smallest sin excludes a soul from heaven, so long as it is not blotted out. But no man will say, that a venial sin, which destroys not sanctifying grace, will be punished with eternal torments. Hence there must be a relaxation of punishment in the world to come. Venial sins of surprise are readily effaced by penance, as we hope, through the divine mercy. Venial sins of malice, or those committed with full deliberation, are of a different nature, far more grievous and fatal. They are usually sins of habit, and lead even to mortal sin.”

Thus, by the help of certain distinctions of sins, conclusions no where warranted in Scripture were drawn, and mankind were led to look on purgatory as a relief to troubled consciences. If they had not effaced their guilt by penance in this life, it was hoped that purgatory, assisted by the prayers and donations made in behalf of the deceased, would release them afterwards from damnation. How strongly men were hence encouraged to live in sin all their days, is but too plain. And it seems wonderful, that so learned and sensible an author as A. Butler should build a doctrine of such practical importance on mere con-

* Butler, Vol. XI. page 27.

jectures, without the least scriptural ground. But on the other hand, whoever sees the real guilt and defilement of sin, of all sorts of sin, and rests wholly and entirely for acceptance with God on the righteousness, atonement, and intercession of Jesus Christ, finds at once the power of superstition and of licentiousness subdued; and he knows how to possess his soul IN PERFECT PEACE; and to serve his heavenly Father “without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of his life*.” The instruction, which lays open this secret, is given by every real protestant teacher of divinity; instruction,—which, we see, the two great admired doctors and supposed luminaries of the thirteenth century were unable to give.

It is much to be wished that we could know more of Hugo the Burgundian, a Roman cardinal, who wrote comments on the whole Scriptures, and honestly exposed the impiety and wickedness of the ecclesiastics of his time. He is said to have been the inventor of concordances. He died at Rome, in the year 1262†.

Hugo the
Burgun-
dian died,
A. D. 1262.

Guilhelmus‡, bishop of Paris, flourished about the year 1230. On Christian justification, and other fundamentals, he thought more justly than many of his contemporaries. He wrote on various religious subjects, and particularly on the collation of benefices; on which point he held, that no man could be a pluralist, without the loss of his soul, unless the value of his preferments was exceedingly small. He was a man of learning and piety.

On this question the care of the Church had been remarkable. In the fourth general council of Chalcedon, by the tenth canon, pluralities were condemned: also at the second council of Nice, in the eighth century. In the sixth council of Paris, held in the year 829, the same practice was pronounced unlawful. And so strongly did the voice of natural conscience, and the common sense of propriety and decorum prevail against the torrent of fashionable corruptions, in speculation at least, that even in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the possession of scandalous pluralities was

Care of the
ancient
Church
respecting
Pluralists.

* Luke i. 74.

† *Ladvocat.*—Cent. Magd. X. 1020.

‡ Cent. Magd. X. 1033.

condemned in a papal council, namely, the fourth council of the Lateran*.

Christianus, bishop of Mentz, was accused before the pope, as a person incapable of governing the Church. For he had refused to be concerned in military and secular employments, and had given himself up to the pastoral care. In these times such a conduct was deemed contemptible at least, if not criminal; after two
A. D. 1251. years residence at Mentz, he resigned; and, not long after, he died, in the year 1251†.

CHAP. VII.

GROSSETESTE, BISHOP OF LINCOLN.

ROBERT GROSSETESTE‡ was born probably about the year 1175; he seems to have been a person of obscure parentage, at Stradbroke in Suffolk. He studied at Oxford, where learning was very zealously cultivated; and there he laid the foundation of his skill in the Greek tongue, the knowledge of which had been introduced from France and Italy. Hence he made himself master of Aristotle, whose works, though idolized, had hitherto been only read through the medium of translation; and at Oxford also he studied the sacred language of the Old Testament. He afterwards went to Paris, the most renowned seminary then in Europe, where he still prose-

* See Burnet's Pastoral Care, Chap. V. and Labb. Concil. Lat. IV.

N. B. Our historian, in the concise notice which he takes of this council, does not mention the dispensing power given to the pope by the twenty-ninth canon. But this can scarcely be deemed a blameable omission by any one who observes, that the dispensing power of the pope under the arrogant form of *NON OBSTANTE*, is strongly reprobated in three distinct places of this Vol., and these at no great distance from this very page, viz. pp. 158. 194. & 196.

The twenty-ninth canon concludes in these words, "*Circa SUBLIMES tamen & LITERATAS personas, quæ majoribus sunt beneficiis honorandæ, cum ratio postulaverit, per sedem apostolicam posterit dispensari.*"—The words *sublimes & literatas* were soon understood to include all persons in any way dependent on great men, and all graduates in any university, provided they could afford to go to Rome and pay for their dispensations.—Labb. XI. page 181.

† Cent. Magd. X. 1052.

‡ I am obliged principally to Mr. Pegge's late valuable publication of the life of this distinguished prelate, for the following account: but I have also consulted Fox the martyrologist, Fascic. rer. expetend: and other authors.

cuted the study of the Hebrew and the Greek, and became a perfect master of the French language. Here also he became, according to the ideas of the age, a consummate theologian and philosopher. Knowledge was then very rude and inaccurate: but Grosseteste, doubtless, possessed all which Europe could furnish. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that he should have been looked on as a magician; the same thing happened to the famous Roger Bacon, who flourished something later.

Grosseteste was a divine of principal note in the University of Oxford. He associated with BOTH the mendicant orders, and was the first lecturer in the Franciscan school of that seminary. He seems to have been always serious in religion, according to the degree of light which he had: and, as his views were very indistinct, it is not surprising that he was, for a time at least, captivated by the appearance of sanctity in those deceivers of mankind.

In the year 1235, he was elected, by the dean and chapter, bishop of Lincoln; and King Henry III. confirmed their choice. That see was then much more extensive than it is at this day: and the new ^{Grosseteste} elected bishop of Lincoln, ^{A. D. 1235.} bishop, who was of an ardent and active spirit, immediately undertook to reform abuses. For

this end he usually went through the several archdeaconries and deaneries, requiring the attendance of the clergy, and admonishing the people likewise to attend, that their children might be confirmed, that they might make their confession, and hear the word of God. Robert himself usually preached to the clergy; and some friar of the Dominican or Franciscan order lectured the people. The friars of these orders were now his particular favourites; and he encouraged them to hear the confessions of the laity, and to enjoin them penance. The secular clergy were naturally enough offended at this predilection of the bishop: they thought that their own rights were invaded. In the mean time the friars themselves gradually brought the new orders into disrepute, by exercising an unlimited dominion over the consciences of the laity, and by enriching themselves at their expense. But Robert, who measured the minds of others by his own honesty and simplicity, and who was pleased with the superior learn-

ing, zeal and activity of these new instruments of the papacy, saw not as yet the evil tendency of their measures, and therefore, he encouraged their labours. The days were evil : the zealous bishop could not think of giving countenance to the secular clergy, who were ignorant and vicious, in preference to the friars ; and, in his zeal for promoting godliness, of which his notions were confused and indigested, he was glad of those assistants, who seemed most cheerfully to co-operate with his own benevolent intentions.

But though he was far more disposed to favour the two new orders than they deserved, he was severe in his censures of the other more ancient orders, and was very strict in his visitations of them. In both parts of his conduct he was influenced by the same upright principle : the hypocrisy indeed of the Dominicans and Franciscans escaped his penetration ; but he could not be deceived by the gross ignorance and dissolute manners of the more ancient orders. Such were the methods by which the prince of darkness seems to have prolonged the reign of Antichrist. The orders of ancient times, having filled up their season in supporting the MAN OF SIN by a specious appearance of holiness, when this was gone, other orders arose, who undertook the same task, and defended the system of iniquity by a severer course of life and manners. Even such men as the bishop of Lincoln, rigidly conscientious and upright, were seduced, undesignedly, to lend their aid in imposing on mankind. In the mean time, the true cure of these evils, namely, the light of Scripture and of its genuine doctrines, was generally unknown in Christendom.

One of the most salutary offices of the art of criticism is to distinguish the genuine works of the ancients from the spurious. This was unknown in Grosseteste's time : and hence the laborious bishop was induced to employ his learning in translating "the Testaments of the twelve Patriarchs" out of Greek into Latin. He thought that he had, by this means, enriched Europe with a valuable monument of sacred antiquity. It is amazing that the bishop should place so contemptible a performance on an equal footing with the Holy Scriptures. It scarcely seemed

worth while to mention such a circumstance, except as a demonstration that the ignorance of the times was exceedingly great, and that the difficulties of acquiring divine knowledge were then immense beyond our conception.

Let it suffice to mention in general, that the bishop of Lincoln was, partly through his love of justice, and partly through the excessive warmth of his temper, frequently engaged in quarrels with convents, and with other agents of the pope. At one time he was even excommunicated by the convent of Canterbury: but this ecclesiastical sentence was so frequently prostituted to the basest purposes, and was so often pronounced on frivolous occasions, that it had, in a great measure, lost its influence on the minds of men. Grosseteste treated it, in his own case, with scorn and contempt, and continued to labour in the promotion of piety, and in the redress of abuses, with unwearied vigour and activity, but at the same time, under all the disadvantages, which the darkness of the times and an eager and vehement temper may be supposed to occasion. So long a course of consistent steadiness, integrity, and so much fear of God, attended with so small a degree of spiritual light, as in the case of this bishop, is not a common phenomenon in the Church of God. But the work of the Holy Spirit in religion is diversified with an endless variety of operations. The instance before us deserves attention. The holy soul of Robert Grosseteste, which was favoured with so much discernment, as just to understand and receive the essentials of godliness, and no more, could not endure with patience the manifold corruptions of the times. He took pains in his diocese to reform various gross abuses, among which was the practice of clergymen acting plays, and maintaining connexion with Jews. The friars were still his favourites: and he rebuked the rectors and vicars of his diocese, because they neglected to hear them preach, and because they discouraged the people from attending and confessing to them. His devoted attachment to the popedom appears hence in a striking light, and still more so in some other transactions, which it is not necessary to particularize. He continued to patronise the friars. These

were his most intimate companions : with these he used to hold conferences on the Scriptures ; and at one time he had thoughts of entering into the Franciscan order himself. But however defective he was in doctrine, he was exceedingly strict in his views of morality : and, like all reformers of the merely active class, who labour to promote external good conduct, with low and inadequate ideas of Christian principle, he excited great offence and disgust, and produced very little solid benefit to mankind.

Events, however, occurred, which in some measure unfolded to the eyes of the bishop the real character of the friars. In 1247, two English Franciscans were sent into England with credentials to extort money for the pope. They applied to the prelates and abbots, but seem, at this time at least, to have met with little success. Grosseteste was

Grosseteste resists the pope's attempts to extort money from the English, in A.D. 1247. amazed at the insolence and pompous appearance of the friars, who assured him that they had the pope's bull, and who earnestly demanded six thousand marks for the contribution of the diocese of Lincoln : " Friars, answered he, with all reverence to his holiness be it spoken, the demand is as dishonourable, as it is impracticable. The whole body of the clergy and people are concerned in it equally with me. For me then to give a definite answer in an instant to such a demand, before the sense of the kingdom is taken upon it, would be rash and absurd." The native good sense of the bishop suggested this answer : but the true Antichristian character of the pope was as yet unknown to Grosseteste.—The blood of our Saviour was about the same time pretended to be brought into England, and he had the weakness to vindicate the delusion.

The bishop continued still to exert himself with the most upright intentions for the good of the Church. But, it was his usual infelicity to " labour in the fire for very vanity *," because he had no distinct perception of the fundamental truths of Christianity. The value of solid and perspicuous views of Evangelical truth was never more forcibly exhibited than in this case. Most bishops or pastors, who have been possessed of this advantage,

* Habak. ii. 13.

though inferior to Grosseteste in magnanimity, industry, and activity, have yet, if truly pious, far exceeded him in promoting the real good of the Church. He translated the works of John Damascenus, and of the spurious Dionysius the Areopagite, and illustrated them with commentaries: the former author was learned indeed, but was the great patron of image worship; and the latter was a contemptible visionary.

It was in the case of practical evils, not of doctrinal errors, that the bishop of Lincoln showed the strength of his discernment: In regard to these he never failed to act with sincerity and vigour. In ^{In} A. D. 1248 1248, he obtained, at a great expense, from ^{he attempts to reform the religious orders.} Innocent IV. letters to empower him to reform the religious orders. If he had understood at that time the real character of Antichrist, he would have foreseen the vanity of all attempts to reform the Church, which were grounded on papal authority. The rectitude however of his own mind was strikingly apparent in the transaction. He saw with grief the waste of large revenues made by the monastic orders; and being supported by the pope, as he thought, he determined to take into his own hand the rents of the religious houses, most propably with a design to institute and ordain vicarages in his diocese, and to provide for the more general instruction of the people. But the monks appealed to the pope; and Grosseteste, in his old age, was obliged to travel to Lyons, where Innocent resided. Roman venality was now at his height, and the pope determined the cause against the bishop. Grieved and astonished at so unexpected a decision, Grosseteste said to Innocent, "I relied on your letters and promises, but am entirely disappointed." "What is that to you," answered the pope, "you have done your part, and we are disposed to favour them: IS YOUR EYE EVIL, BECAUSE I AM GOOD?" With such shameless effrontery can wicked men trifle with scriptural passages. The bishop, in a low tone, but so as to be heard, said with indignation, "O money, how great is thy power, especially at the court of Rome!" The remark was bold and indignant, but perfectly just. It behoved Innocent to give some answer; and he used the common

method of wicked men in such cases, namely, to retort the accusation. "You English," said he, "are always grinding and impoverishing one another. How many religious men, persons of prayer and hospitality, are you striving to depress, that you may sacrifice to your own tyranny and avarice!"—So spake the most unprincipled of robbers to a bishop, whose unspotted integrity was allowed by all the world.

All that the bishop could do was to leave his testimony at the court of Rome; and he delivered three copies of a long sermon, one copy to the pope, the other two copies to two of the cardinals. In this discourse he sharply inveighed against the flagitious practices of the court of Rome, particularly the appropriation of churches to religious houses, the appeals of the religious to the pope, and the scandalous clause* in the bulls of *NON OBSTANTE*, which was the great engine of the pope's dispensing power. He observes, that the Son of God submitted to a most ignominious death for the redemption of human souls, which, without mercy, were delivered to wolves and bears. His uprightness and magnanimity were evidenced by this step, but no good effect appeared. To explain and enforce the doctrines of the Gospel, and to prove the whole structure of the papacy perfectly inconsistent with those doctrines, would have been a far more likely method of promoting the edification of the Church; but to this task the light and knowledge of the bishop were unequal. He was for some time so dejected with the disappointment which he had met with, that he formed intentions of resigning his bishopric. But, recollecting what ravages of the Church might be the consequence of such a step, he felt it his duty to remain in his office, and to do all the good, which the infelicity of the times would permit.

The bishop often preached to the people in the course of his perambulation through his diocese; and he required the neighbouring clergy to attend the sermons. He earnestly exhorted them to be laborious in ministering to their flocks: and the lazy Italians, who, by virtue of the pope's letters, had been intruded into opulent benefices,

* See an account of the effect of this clause, in page 196. See also the note in p. 188.

and who neither understood the language of the people, nor wished to instruct them, were the objects of his detestation. He would often with indignation cast the papal bulls out of his hands, and absolutely refuse to comply with them, saying, that he should be the friend of Satan, if he should commit the care of souls to foreigners. INNOCENT, however, persisting in his plan, peremptorily ordered him to admit an Italian, perfectly ignorant of the English language, to a very rich benefice in the diocese of Lincoln; and Grosseteste, refusing to obey, was suspended. Grosseteste suspended. Whether the sentence of suspension was formally repealed, or not, does not appear. Certain it is, that the bishop continued to exercise his episcopal functions; and shortly we shall advert to facts, which prove in a still more striking manner, with what impunity he despised the papal mandates.

Observing that churches appropriated to religious houses had not always stated vicars, and that where vicarages existed, they were often meanly endowed, he obtained at length, in 1250, a bull from Innocent to empower him to regulate these matters. He obtains a bull for the regulation of the Churches: A. D. 1250. The evil was indeed enormous; but the persevering zeal of the bishop, supported by the extensive influence of his character, prevailed at length in some degree over the pope's usurpations; and a considerable number of vicarages in his diocese were at length regulated. A pious and upright perseverance in the reformation of abuses, amidst many vexatious disappointments, is seldom altogether in vain; and this wise and encouraging order of the divine government is extremely worthy of the attention of dignitaries of the Church in all ages.

Grosseteste united the labours of his pen to those of the episcopal office. He began a comment on the Psalter, though he lived not to finish the work; and he seems to have known no other recreation, than what naturally arose from the variety of his religious employments.

In January 1253, Innocent was desirous of preferring his nephew, an Italian youth, in the cathedral of Lincoln; and for this purpose, he, by letter, directed the bishop of the diocese to give him the first canonry that should be

The pope appoints his nephew to a canonry by Provision: A. D. 1253.

vacant. This was to be done by **PROVISION**; for that was the decent term employed by the pontiff when he undertook to provide a successor to a benefice beforehand, under pretence of correcting the abuse of long vacancies. **INNOCENT** seems to have been determined in this instance to intimidate the bishop into submission. He declared, that any other disposal of the canonry should be null and void; and that he would excommunicate every one who should dare to disobey his injunction. He wrote to two Italians, his agents in England, ordering them to ensure and complete the appointment, with his usual clause of **NON OBSTANTE**; a clause pregnant with the most intolerable abuses; for it set aside all statutes and customs, and obliged them to give way to the present humour of the pope*.

Grosseteste, resolute in his disobedience, wrote an **EPISTLE** on this occasion, which has made his name immortal. As he advanced in years, he saw more clearly the corruptions of the popedom, which, however, he still looked on as of divine authority. But if we set aside this remnant of the prejudices of education, he argues altogether on Protestant principles. Some extracts of the epistle may deserve the reader's attention †. "I am not disobedient to the Apostolical precepts.—I am bound by the divine command to obey them. Our Saviour Christ saith, whosoever is not with me, is against me.—Our lord the Pope appears to be his type and representative. It is impossible then that the sanctity of the apostolical see can be repugnant to the authority of Jesus Christ. The **NON OBSTANTE** clause overflows with uncertainty, fraud, and deceit, and strikes at the root of all confidence between man and man. Next to the sin of Antichrist, which shall be in the latter time, nothing can be more contrary to the doctrine of Christ, than to destroy men's souls, by defrauding them of the benefit of the pastoral office. Those, who serve their own carnal desires by means of the milk and pool of the sheep of Christ, and do not minister the pastoral office to the salvation of the

Grosseteste
opposes the
Pope with
great spirit.

* Fascic. rer. Vol. II. 399.

† See Fox, Vol. I. p. 365. and M. Paris, p. 870. Fascic. rer. Vol. II. 400.

flock, are guilty of destroying souls. Two enormous evils are in this way committed. In one respect they sin directly against God himself, who is essentially good; in another against the image of God in man, which, by the reception of grace, is partaker of the divine nature.—For the holy apostolical see to be accessory to so great wickedness, would be a horrible abuse of the fulness of power, an entire separation from the glorious kingdom of Christ, and a proximity to the two princes of darkness*. No man, faithful to the said see, can, with an unspotted conscience, obey such mandates, even if they were seconded by the high order of angels themselves; on the contrary, every faithful Christian ought to oppose them with all his might. It is therefore in perfect consistence with my duty of obedience, that I withstand these enormities, so abominable to the Lord Jesus Christ, so repugnant to the holiness of the apostolical see, and so contrary to the unity of the catholic faith. I say then, this see cannot act but to edification; but your PROVISIONS are to destruction. The holy see neither can nor ought to attempt any such thing; for flesh and blood, and not the Heavenly Father, hath revealed such doctrines.”

It is not clear whether this epistle was written to the pope directly, or to some of his agents. It was meant, however, for his inspection; and it affords a marvellous instance of that Christian boldness and honesty for which Grosseteste is so justly renowned.—Sullied, indeed, were the qualities of this good man with much doctrinal error, but ever animated by a true zeal for the honour of God, and by the deepest sense of the worth of souls.

Innocent, on receiving the positive denial, accompanied with such warm remonstrances, was incensed beyond measure: and “Who,” said he, “is this old dotard, who dares to judge my actions? By Peter and Paul, if I were not restrained by my generosity, I would make him an example and a spectacle to all mankind. Is not the king of England my vassal, and my slave? and, if I gave the word, would he not throw him into prison, and load him with infamy and disgrace?” In so low a light did the bishop of Rome behold the monarch of this island! But

* He seems to mean the Devil and Antichrist.

king John had reduced his kingdom into a state of subjection to the pope ; and the same vassalage continued all the days of his pusillanimous successor. The cardinals, however, who saw the danger which the pope incurred by his arrogance and temerity, endeavoured to moderate his resentment. Giles, in particular, a Spanish cardinal, said *, “ It is not expedient for you to proceed against the bishop in that violent manner. For what he saith is certainly true, nor can we with decency condemn him. He is a holy man, more so than we ourselves are ; a man of excellent genius, and of the best morals ; no prelate in Christendom is thought to excel him. By this time, it is possible, that the truths expressed in this epistle are divulged among many ; and they will stir up numbers against us. The clergy, both of France and England, know the character of the man, nor is it possible to cast any stigma upon him. He is believed to be a great philosopher, an accomplished scholar in Latin and Greek literature, zealous in the administration of justice, a reader of theology in the schools, a popular preacher, a lover of chastity, and an enemy of simony.” Others joined with Giles in the same sentiments. On the whole, the cardinals advised the pope to connive at these transactions, lest some tumult might arise in the Church, for they said, it was an evident truth, that a revolt from the Church of Rome would one day take place in Christendom. It seems there were even then some discerning spirits, who could foresee, that so unrighteous a domination would in time be brought to a close. Yet the prevalence of ambition and avarice induced them to support their domination, though they were convinced of its iniquity.

But the fury of Innocent was not to be allayed. He pronounced the sentence of excommunication against Grosseteste ; and nominated Albert, one of his nuncios, to the bishopric of Lincoln. The bishop appealed to the tribunal of Christ, and paid no regard to the decree. What the cardinals foresaw, came to pass ; the pope’s commands were universally neglected ; and the bishop continued in quiet possession of his dignity.

Grosseteste is
excommunicated by the
Pope,

A.D. 1253.

* Fox, Vol. I. p. 366. Pegge, p. 248.

In the latter end of the summer of the same year 1253, he was seized with a mortal disease at his palace at Buckden; and he sent for friar John de St. Giles, to converse with him on the state of the Church. The bishop taken ill; He blamed Giles and his brethren the Dominicans, and also the Franciscans, because, though their orders were founded in voluntary poverty, they did not rebuke the vices of the great. A. D. 1253. "I am convinced," said he, "that both the pope, unless he amend his errors, and the friars, except they endeavour to restrain him, will be deservedly exposed to everlasting death." We may hence collect what was the foundation of that respect which the bishop was wont to pay to the friars; it was the eclat of their voluntary poverty, which he hoped would have enabled them to be faithful dispensers of the Word of God, as by it they seemed to be removed above the temptations of avarice. If a man of his understanding was deceived by their feigned sanctity, it ought to be less matter of surprise that the world at large was imposed on by the same cause; and that the institution of these orders proved so convenient a support to the popedom for several generations. The mind of Grosseteste was always more clear in discerning the END of true religion than it was in discovering the MEANS of promoting it. Upright, intrepid, disinterested, and constantly influenced by the fear of God, he yet failed to bring about the good which he had conceived in his heart, because he had too little acquaintance with "the mystery of godliness," and because he too much relied on moral and prudential plans for that reformation of mankind, which is sought in vain from every thing, except from the knowledge and application of the Gospel.

But the bishop was rapidly advancing towards eternity: and he seems now to have had more powerful manifestations of divine truth from the Spirit of God, than any with which he had hitherto been favoured. His zeal evidently arose from the purest charity. Superior to selfish considerations, he was absorbed in meditations concerning the Church; and we have from a contemporary historian* an account of his last conversations with his chaplains, in

* Matt. Paris.

which there was probably something still more evangelical than what they or the historian could understand. It is, however, our duty to report it as it is delivered to us; and clergymen at least will find it worthy their attention.

“In October, the bishop, oppressed with a fatal distemper, whatever it was, sent for some of his chaplains, and conversed with them. Christ, said he, with a sigh, came into the world to save souls; ought not he, then, who takes pains to ruin souls, to be denominated Antichrist? Our God built the universe in six days, but he laboured more than thirty years to restore man when fallen. Is not then the destroyer of souls, the Antichrist and the enemy of God? The pope is not ashamed impudently to disannul, by his clauses of *NON OBSTANTE*, the decrees of the holy pontiffs, his predecessors. Many other popes have afflicted the Church; this *INNOCENT* has enslaved it more than they.” He then recounts their usurious and fraudulent proceedings in England, and inveighs against the arts of amassing money practised by the friars on account of the crusades. I have seen, said he, an instrument, in which it was inserted, that those, who, in their wills, devised money for the use of the crusades, should receive indulgence in proportion to the sum they gave. He then exposed the scandalous practice of disposing of ecclesiastical benefices, and lamented that the friars, the devotees of poverty, were now converted into tax-gatherers to the pope, belying the habit they wore, while they were made more secular than ever. The bishop, indignant at these and other horrible proceedings, observed, “The Church can never be delivered from this Egyptian bondage, but by the edge of the sword;” and while he was scarcely able to speak for sighs and tears, his breath and his voice failed him. He might be sharpened in his accusations by the personal ill treatment which he himself had received; but it must be owned, that he had a distinct knowledge of facts, and a most just abhorrence of hypocrisy and iniquity. And it is only to be lamented, that he had lived so long a time, and remained so little acquainted with the only Christian armour of doctrine, which can cut down the powers of Antichrist.

Grosseteste dies at Buckden, A. D. 1253. He died at Buckden, October 9, 1253. *INNOCENT* heard of his death with plea-

sure; and said with exultation, "I rejoice, and let every true son of the Roman church rejoice with me, that my great enemy is removed." He ordered a letter to be written to king Henry, requiring him to take up the bishop's body, to cast it out of the church, and to burn it. The cardinals, however, opposed the tyrant; and the letter was never sent, probably on account of the decline of Innocent's health; for he died the succeeding year.

M. Paris, though most superstitiously attached to the Roman see, and prejudiced against the bishop of Lincoln, on account of his severity towards the ancient monastic orders, was, however, a man of probity and honour; and he has left such a testimony to the character of Grosseteste, as deserves to be presented to the reader*.

"The holy bishop Robert departed this world, which he never loved, and which was always to him as a place of banishment. He was the open reprover both of my lord the pope, and of the king, and the censurer of the prelates, the corrector of monks, the director of priests, the instructor of the clergy, the supporter of scholars, the preacher to the laity, the punisher of incontinence, the diligent investigator of various writings, and lastly he was the scourge of lazy and selfish Romans, whom he heartily despised. In the supply of the temporal table, liberal, copious, polite, cheerful and affable. In the spiritual table, devout, humble, and contrite. In the episcopal office, diligent, venerable, and indefatigable." The historian adds to this, "that even in those instances of discipline, in which he seemed to bear the hardest on the monks, he was allowed to have acted always with the purest intentions."

His character by
M. Paris.

Grosseteste appears to have had no great turn for public business; he neglected it for the most part: nor did he frequent the court. The salvation of souls was perpetually in his thoughts and in his mouth; and it is devoutly to be wished, that many, whose evangelical light is far superior to his, resembled him in tenderness of conscience, in unwearied activity and zeal, and in genuine humility and modesty of spirit, with which, notwithstanding the disadvantage of a temper plainly irascible in a great degree, he was very eminently endowed.

* Matt. Paris, p. 876. Edit. Lond. 1640.

In one of his letters he shows the idea which he had formed of the importance of the pastoral office*. “I dare not, for the love of God,” says he, “confer the care of souls on any person, who will not sedulously discharge the office in person. The office itself is of the last importance; it requires a governor always **RESIDENT**, who applies himself to it with vigilance, prudence, diligence, and fervour; who preaches the word of the Lord in season and out of season; who exhibits himself an example of good works; who, when he gives salutary admonition and is not regarded, can grieve and lament; who shakes his hands from holding bribes; who so evidently applies to pious uses the pecuniary fines, which he receives for the punishment of faults, that he is perfectly free from all suspicion of selfishness and avarice on that account; who is delighted, when he can with a good conscience acquit the accused; whom no prejudice, passion, intreaty, or gift, or partiality, can divert from the path of rectitude; who delights in labour, and whose whole desire is to profit souls.” He, who in an age of superstition, which afforded so many temptations to venality and corruption, could act according to the spirit of these rules, must have been possessed of the Spirit of Christ, and have been superior to the spirit of the world.

To have so much enlarged on the character and transactions of a man so little distinguished, in regard to evangelical knowledge, as bishop Grosseteste was, from the common herd of papists in his time, might seem to need an apology, were I not sensible, that the eminence of his **PRACTICAL** godliness demonstrates, that he must have been in possession of the fundamentals of Divine Truth; and, that the candid and intelligent reader may receive edification from a light which burned with steadiness in the Church of God, though in much obscurity.

The evidence, however, of the bishop’s knowledge of fundamental truths is not only to be collected by fair in-
Sermons of Grosseteste. ferences, but is also direct and positive. A number of his sermons in manuscript are still extant†. I have examined one of these throughout, which was preached from our Saviour’s words in the sixth chapter of St. Luke, “Blessed are ye poor, for

* Pegge. † They are preserved in the Cathedral of St. Peter at York.

your's is the kingdom of God." Let it suffice to condense the ideas contained in this sermon into a narrow compass, by a very short abridgment, which to the best of my power shall be faithful to the sentiments of the author, though I have not thought it worth while to translate accurately the barbarous Latin of the original.

He undertakes to describe the poverty recommended in the text, which, by comparison with another evangelist*, appears to be poverty in spirit. This poverty, he observes, is wrought in the heart of the elect by the Holy Spirit. Its foundation, he tells us, is laid in real humility, which disposes a man to feel, that he has nothing, except what he has received from above. But this is not all; for humility in this view belonged to Adam before he fell. But the humility of a SINNER has a still deeper root. The humble man not only sees that he has nothing in himself, but he is also stripped of all desire to possess in himself the springs of self-exaltation. Condemned in himself, and corrupt before God, he despairs of help from his own powers, and in seeking he finds HIM, who is the true life, wisdom, and health, who is all in all, even the Incarnate Son of God, who descended into our vale of sin and misery, that he might raise us from their depths. By leaning on HIM alone, every true Christian rises into true life, and peace, and joy. He lives in HIS life, he sees light in HIS light, he is invigorated with HIS warmth, and he grows in HIS strength, and leaning upon the Beloved, his soul ascends upwards. The lower he sinks in humility, the higher he rises toward God. He is sensible that he not only is nothing in himself, but that he has also lost what he had gratuitously received,—has precipitated himself into misery, and so subjected himself to the slavery of the devil; and lastly, that he has no internal resources for recovery. Thus he is induced to place his whole dependence on the Lord; to abhor himself, and always to prefer others, and "to take the lowest seat" as his own proper place.—The humble soul is called on by our author, solicitously to examine himself, whether he really demonstrates in his temper and practice this grace of humility; and to beware lest, even if he do find some evidences of it in his soul, he

* Matt. v.

be inflated with the discovery, because he ought to know, that it is from the Lord alone that he is what he is; and that he ought no more to boast of himself than the shining colours in the glass should glory in that splendour, which they derive entirely from the solar rays. He observes, that the temptations to self-complacency are the effect of Satanic injections; and that it behoves him, who would be found unfeignedly humble, to see whether he has the genuine marks of humility in practice; whether, for instance, he can bear to be rebuked by an inferior, whether he is not rendered insolent by honours, whether he is not inflated by praise, whether among equals he is the first to labour, and the last to exalt himself, whether he can render blessings for curses, and good for evil. By such methods of self-examination he is to check the ebullitions of vain-glory, with which the tempter is apt to inspire those, who seem to have made some proficiency in grace. If that proficiency be real, let them take care never to conceive of it as something separate from Christ: HE alone dwelling in them by his Spirit produces all that is good, and to him alone the praise belongs.

To the directions and cautions concerning humility, which indeed form the most evangelical and most useful part of the sermon, the bishop adds some directions concerning the contempt of the world, and the love of heavenly things. On the latter subject he quotes Augustine and Gregory, on the former he addresses his audience, as having already embraced voluntary poverty. Hence it appears, that the discourse was addressed to a company of Ascetics; and it must be confessed that he labours with great correctness to prevent them from presumptuously imagining themselves to be just and righteous. Throughout the discourse there is excellent matter, and it is well calculated to humble the proud; but there is very little to encourage the sincere. He seems to have no idea of the attainment of a state of solid peace and joy; nor is it to be wondered at. Like most of the very best divines, who wrote in those days, he knew not the just nature of the Christian article of justification by Jesus Christ the righteous; and though he appears to have trusted in HIM for eternal salvation, and knew too well his own deficiencies,

to put any trust in himself, yet he evidently wanted the full assurance of understanding of the MYSTERY OF GODLINESS *, and could not, with his inefficacious religious views, HAVE ACCESS WITH CONFIDENCE by the faith of Jesus †.

The honest and intrepid spirit, with which this excellent prelate opposed the scandalous practices of pope Innocent IV. has sufficiently appeared in the course of this chapter. But the Christian reader may not be displeased to see additional proofs of the genuine humility of his mind. Self-righteousness and self-confidence seem to have been his aversion in the extreme. Dependence on God as a reconciled Father in Christ Jesus, was his grand practical principle.—The following passages are translated from the Latin Opuscula of Grosseteste ‡.

While he was archdeacon of Leicester, in one of his letters he writes thus: “ Nothing that occurs in your letters ought to give me more pain than your styling me a person invested with authority, and endued with the lustre of knowledge. So far am I from thinking as you do, that I feel myself unfit even to be the disciple of a person of authority; moreover, in innumerable matters which are objects of knowledge, I perceive myself enveloped in the darkness of ignorance. But did I really possess the great qualities you ascribe to me, HE alone would be worthy of the praise, and the whole of it ought to be referred unto HIM, to whom we daily say, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give the glory.”

The same modesty and self-abasement accompanied him to the episcopal chair. In his subsequent letters he usually styled himself, “ Robert, by divine permission the poor minister of the church of Lincoln.”

On the important subject of Divine Grace, he expresses himself in the following manner: “ Grace is that good pleasure of God, whereby he is pleased to bestow upon us what we have not deserved; and the gift is for our advantage, not His. Wherefore it is very clear, that all the good we possess, whether it be natural, or freely conferred afterwards, proceeds from the grace of God; because there is no good thing, the existence of which he

* Coloss. ii. 2.

† Eph. iii. 12.

‡ Vol. II. Fascic. rer.

does not will ; and for God to will any thing, is to do it ; therefore there can be no good of which he is not the author. He it is, who turns the human will from evil, and converts it to good, and also causes it to persevere in the same. Nevertheless man's free-will operates in this matter, as the grain shoots by an external germinative power, and by the heat of the sun and the moisture of the earth. For if it were impossible that we should turn from the evil and be converted to the good, we should not be commendable in so doing, nor should we be ordered in Scripture to do so. And again, if we could do this without the grace of God, there would be no propriety in praying to God for it, nor would our success depend upon his will. A will to do good, by which a man becomes conformed to the will of God, is grace freely given. The Divine will is grace ; and grace is then said to be infused, when the Divine will begins to operate upon our will."

This extract contains a fair representation of Grosseteste's sentiments ; and may be thought the more expedient, because some authors, in their accounts of the faith of this good prelate, seem to have suppressed such expressions as did not well accord with their own views. The historian endeavours to avoid controversy ; yet he may be allowed to remark, that on the subjects of grace, free-will, and justification, bishop Grosseteste does not always preserve an invariable consistency. The wonder, however, as hath been justly observed, ought to be, that he should have seen so well as he did. In general, he was eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures ; fervent in spirit, speaking and teaching boldly the things of the Lord ;—though, like Apollos, he sometimes needed an " Aquila and Priscilla to expound to him the way of God more perfectly."

CENTURY XIV.

CHAP. I.

THE GENERAL STATE OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

THE same ignorance and superstition, the same vices and immoralities, which predominated in the last century, discoloured the appearance of the Church in this. Real Christians were still to be found either only among the Waldenses, or else they worshipped God in obscurity, under the unspeakable disadvantages of the general corruption. There arose indeed in this century, various sectaries, besides the Waldenses, who were cruelly persecuted, both by popes and emperors; of whom, therefore, at first sight, we are ready to conclude, that they must have been the real people of God. I cannot, however, find positive evidence, that any of them professed the real doctrines, or were influenced by the real Spirit, of Jesus. Some of them were the disgrace of human nature, both in their principles and their practice; and I mean not to detail the narratives of fanaticisms, with which most ecclesiastical histories abound. The term Lollard was affixed in general to all those, who professed, whether on solid principles of godliness or not, a greater degree of attention to acts of piety and devotion, than the rest of mankind. Of these, Walter Raynard, a Dutchman, was apprehended and burnt at Cologne. This is he, whom I have already called Raynard Lollard, in the account of the Waldenses, and from whom the Wickliffites are supposed to have acquired the name of Lollards. I have carefully attended to Mosheim's account of the origin of the term *, and am convinced from his reasonings, that Lollard was a general name of reproach given to professors of piety, and not the proper name of any particular person. But it by no means thence follows, as Mosheim contends, that Walter Raynard always belonged to some sect of the Romish com-

* See Mosheim, Vol. I. pp. 744. 757.

munion. The accounts of the most eminent German authors constantly represent him as a protestant, and the common use of the term Lollard in England, as applied to the followers of Wickliffe and of Walter Raynard, could scarcely have obtained, if the latter had continued a papist till his death*.

The Church of God, therefore, considered as a society, seems only to have existed among the people, whose history has been related above†. Of other sects the detail would be as insipid as it would be obscure and perplexed; and whoever has remarked the confusion of terms, which negligence, obloquy, or artifice, have introduced into the ecclesiastical accounts of sects and parties, will find little reason to acquiesce in the arrangements of their classes, which writers in different ages have made. Let us attend to facts rather than to terms. It is certain, that there were many societies of persons in this century called Beghards, Beguines, Lollards, Brethren of the Free Spirit, Flagellants, &c., who suffered extremely from the iron hand of power. Among all these, the people called Waldenses, and called also Lollards,—with what propriety is a question of little importance,—seem perfectly distinguished, by their solid piety, sound scriptural judgment, and practical godliness; and therefore they may justly be accounted to have suffered for righteousness sake; while the rest, as far as certainly appears, were the martyrs of folly, turbulence, or impiety.

In the East, the profession of Christianity still pervaded that contracted empire of the Greeks, of which Constantinople was the metropolis. But no Christian records are come down to us of any thing like the primitive Gospel. Even the profession of Christianity, which had existed in China, was extirpated through the jealousy of the reigning powers; and the famous Tamerlane, the Tartar, cruelly persecuted all who bore the Christian name, being persuaded, as a Mahometan, that it was highly meritorious to destroy them. Thus even the form of godliness declined in Asia: the power of it, alas! had

* On the contrary, as it has been mentioned already, Walter Raynard, from a Franciscan and an enemy, became a Waldensian, preached the Gospel, and suffered on that account at Cologne.—Page 153 of this Vol.

† Waldenses.

vanished long before. Nor were the attempts, which were made in Europe to renew the crusades, by means of indulgences, calculated to revive the light of the Gospel in the East, even if they had succeeded. The Holy Land had been lost in 1291; and an army ^{Holy Land lost:} was collected in 1363, under the auspices of ^{A. D. 1291.} pope Urban V. commanded by John king of France, that same monarch, who had been taken prisoner by Edward the Black Prince, at the battle of Poitiers. But John departed this life, and Urban's hopes from the crusade were blasted.

In the mean time the boundaries of Christianity had been gradually extended in Europe*. Jagello, duke of Lithuania, was now almost the only pagan prince in that quarter of the world. And he, influenced by secular views, became a Christian in name and profession, and by this means acquired the crown of Poland. The Teutonic knights continued also the military methods of obliging the Prussians and Livonians to profess the Gospel, and completed in this century, what they had begun in the last.

The maxims and examples of the court of Rome were unspeakably prejudicial to the cause of godliness in this century. The practice of PROVISIONS, which had so much inflamed the zeal of bishop Grosseteste, was now reduced into a system by the popes who resided in France, and all Europe complained of their impositions. In England, in the beginning of the reign of Edward III. almost upon every vacancy the court of Rome pretended to fill the sees in this way†. Indeed its ambition and avarice were unbounded: it claimed a right to dispose of all offices in the Church both great and small, and in that way amassed incredible sums. That same Boniface VIII. whom we left in the pontifical see at the close of the last century, filled the Christian world with the noise and turbulence of his ambition. He followed the steps of Hildebrand, and attempted to be equally despotic in civil and ecclesiastical matters. He it was, who forbade the clergy to pay any thing to princes without his permission‡. He also instituted a jubilee, which was to be

* Mosheim, Vol. I. p. 713.

† Collier.

‡ Du Pin.

renewed every hundred years, by which he granted plenary indulgences to all strangers, who should visit the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul in Rome*.
Death of Boniface VIII. This unprincipled pontiff died in extreme misery in 1303, in the ninth year of his papacy.
A.D. 1303.

The schism which afterwards took place in the popedom was providentially a blessing to mankind. While, for the space of fifty years, the Church had two or three heads at the same time; and, while each of the contending popes was anathematizing his competitors, the reverence of mankind for the popedom itself was insensibly diminished; and the labours of those, whom God raised up to propagate divine truth, began to be more seriously regarded by men of conscience and probity.

In this century flourished the celebrated John Duns Scotus. Whether he was born in England, Scotland, or Ireland, has been disputed. That he was a famous schoolman is well known. But in the light of true religion, I know nothing concerning him. The same thing may be said of Raymund Lully, William Ockham of Surrey, in England, and of Petrarch, that great reviver of polite literature in Italy. These were some of the most famous men in their age; but they helped not the Church of God. Toward the close, however, of this period,—for the most part one of the most uninteresting in Church-history,—there arose in England a Luminary†, whose principles, conduct, and writings will require a distinct consideration, and whom I reserve to the third chapter. The same country furnishes us also with another equally rare and excellent, though much less celebrated character, I mean BRADWARDINE, archbishop of Canterbury, of whom an account will be given in the next chapter.—In the remainder of this it will be worth while to add a few particular circumstances, which may show in what sort of an age Bradwardine lived.

The accounts of individuals in this century, who truly feared God and wrought righteousness, are extremely scarce. One person, I find on the Continent, who seems

* The successors of Boniface, finding that the jubilee augmented the revenue of the Roman church, fixed its return to every twenty-fifth year.

† WICKLIFF.

not unworthy of a place in these memoirs, I mean Eleazar, Count of Arian in Naples, born in 1295. At the age of twenty-three he succeeded to his father's estate. That this youth, in very affluent circumstances, and at a time of life when the passions are usually strong, could support a constant tenor of devotion and religious seriousness to his death, which took place about five years after, seems scarcely to have originated from principles lower than those of real Christianity. The regulations of his household are very remarkable; some of which are as follows:

"I cannot allow any blasphemy in my house, nor any thing in word or deed which offends the laws of decorum.

"Let the ladies spend the morning in reading and prayer, the afternoon at some work.

"Dice and all games of hazard are prohibited.

"Let all persons in my house divert themselves at proper times, but never in a sinful manner.

"Let there be constant peace in my family; otherwise two armies are formed under my roof, and the master is devoured by them both.

"If any difference arise, let not the sun go down upon your wrath.

"We must bear with something, if we have to live among mankind. Such is our frailty, we are scarcely in tune with ourselves a whole day; and if a melancholy humour come on us, we know not well what we would have.

"Not to bear and not to forgive, is diabolical; to love enemies, and to do good for evil, is the mark of the children of God.

"Every evening all my family shall be assembled at a godly conference, in which they shall hear something of God and salvation. Let none be absent on pretence of attending to my affairs. I have no affairs so interesting to me as the salvation of my domestics.

"I seriously forbid all injustice, which may cloak itself under colour of serving me.

"If I feel impatience under affront," said he, on one occasion, "I look at Christ. Can any thing, which I suffer, be like to that which he endured for me?"

We are told that his conduct in life corresponded to these maxims. I could not prevail on myself to pass over in silence such a character as this, whom general history, full of the intrigues and ambitious enterprizes of popes and princes, neither knows nor regards. God has his secret saints in the dullest seasons of the Church, and Eleazar seems to have been one of these. But he was soon removed from this vale of sorrow ; for he died in the twenty-eighth year of his age. His behaviour in his last sickness was of a piece with his life. The history of our Saviour's passion was read to him daily, and his mind was consoled by this means amidst the pains with which he was afflicted*.

But whoever, in these times, had any serious impressions of religion, could scarcely meet with the least solid instruction. For the preaching of the Word was so much disused, that it is remarked as a singular commendation of Thomas De la Mare, abbot of St. Alban's in the time of our king Edward III. that he preached in the priory of Tinmouth, where he presided before he was elected abbot of St. Alban's, and employed many secular clergy and mendicants to do the same, perceiving the function of preaching to be wholly omitted in monasteries†, little practised by the seculars, and engrossed by the mendicants. If "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," we may venture to affirm, that whenever Christian preaching is disused or despised, whether through the influence of superstition or of refinement, then godliness is at a low ebb, and the principles of Christianity are almost unknown. A pious Eleazar may in some measure supply the want to his own family ; but what must be the state of knowledge in the world at large ? The truths of the Gospel are by no means obvious ; they require study, attention, meditation ; all the prejudices of our fallen nature oppose them when brought into full prospect ; how dark then must be the minds of those who never hear of them ! The formalities of monasticism may give a false peace to the conscience, but they cannot enlighten the understanding, nor regulate the heart. Hence, amidst the most splendid appearances of religion, wicked-

* Butler, Vol. IX.

† Newcombe's History of St. Alban's.

ness abounded, and a cumbersome mass of superstitions was a poor substitute for the love of God and man. In the abbey of St. Alban's the superiors decked themselves with excess of pompous attire. They wore vestments as rich as art and money could make them; and though they changed their attire every day, they could not bring them all into use. Such was the state of things during the presidency of Thomas De la Mare, an abbot, who was looked on as the mirror of piety.

Some attempts were, however, made in England to stem the torrent of ecclesiastical corruption. Even in the preceding century, about the year 1265*, a national Synod, held at London under Othobon, the pope's legate, undertook to reform the abuses, of which the whole nation loudly complained. This synod, in which Welch, Scotch and Irish clergymen were present as well as English, was looked on as of great authority, and as a rule of ecclesiastical discipline to the Church. Several of its canons are still in force, and make part of the canon law†. The ninth canon provides against the evil of non-residence, obliges the clergyman presented to a benefice, to resign his other preferments, and swear to reside. The twentieth provides against commutations for offences, and forbids the archdeacon ever to receive money on such accounts; for, "such practices," say the synod, "amount, in effect, to the grant of a licence to sin." Severe, but just censure of the whole papal doctrine of indulgences! How little room was there to hope, that this canon would be strictly observed in archdeaconries, or in any other limited district, while the supreme rulers of the Church were breaking it continually!

In a council held at Lambeth in 1281‡, a canon was enacted, which lays down rules of preaching concerning the fundamental articles of religion. It contains some wholesome truths, but mixed with much superstition. But the worst part of the canon is, that the parish-priest was obliged to explain

Synod at
London in
A.D. 1265.

Council at
Lambeth in
A.D. 1281.

* Collier.

† Several of these canons are only Otho's constitutions confirmed and enforced with further penalties.

‡ Collier.

these fundamental articles only once a quarter. One is almost tempted to think, that the dignitaries of the Church formerly prohibited some abuses, merely to save appearances, and were afraid, lest frequency of preaching might prove the means of a complete reformation. In this same council at Lambeth they allow the BLOOD of Christ in the lesser churches, only to the priest, and the WINE which they granted to the laity, they said, was merely wine. It was expressly declared, that the whole body and blood of Christ was given at once under the species of bread; though sometimes a cup of wine was given to the people*. And thus the innovation of denying to the laity communion in both kinds was gradually introduced. This was one of the latest, and at the same time, one of the most shameless and absurd corruptions of popery, destitute of every ground of argument, either from Scripture or common sense; nor is it easy to conceive how it could ever have found its way into Christendom. Was it, that those who invented it, intended to strengthen men's minds in the belief of transubstantiation, and also by sensible marks to impress on the imaginations of the people the superior dignity of the clergy? Be this as it may, we certainly find, that in the century, which we are at present reviewing, superstition has advanced some steps farther.

In the reign of Edward I. one of the wisest and most vigorous of our princes, it was natural for those who groaned under Romish oppressions, to expect some relief. But the pusillanimous conduct of his father, Henry III. had, during a very long reign, enabled the popes to enslave the nation completely, and unless the successor had himself felt the spirit of godliness, of which there are no evidences, it was not to be expected, that he would exert himself for the good of the Church. Edward indeed was very great in the arts both of war and of peace; but in ecclesiastical matters he did little for his country. He paid, though with reluctance, the tribute imposed on king John, which had been remitted to Rome all the days of Henry III. He would not, however, allow it to be called a tribute; and he constantly maintained that he was not

* Spelman, Concil. p. 329. Henry's Hist. Book V.

a vassal of the Roman see. His weak son and successor, Edward II. cannot be supposed to have been capable of relieving the nation ; but under Edward III. something was done to restrain the encroachments of the popedom. This great prince resolutely refused to pay the annual stipend to Rome, and procured a parliamentary declaration, that king John had no right to reduce the English realm to a state of vassalage. By the statute of provisors he secured the rights of patrons and electors of livings against the claims of the papal see, and outlawed those who should dare to appeal to Rome.

On the Continent also the papal tyranny met with some opposition. The emperor Lewis was excommunicated by pope Clement VI. because he had dared to exercise the imperial authority, which had been conferred on him by the electors, without waiting for the confirmation of the pope ; and so prevalent was the reign of superstition, that Lewis was obliged to renounce the imperial dignity. There was not wanting, however, some learned men, who protested against these papal usurpations, and particularly Marsilius of Padua, who published a defence of the emperor's authority against the encroachments of the pope, and maintained some protestant positions, not only in regard to ecclesiastical government, but also in support of that which is infinitely more important, the pure doctrine of the Gospel. In substance he appears to have held * that leading article of Christianity, justification before God, only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings : and he affirmed that good works are not the efficient cause of our acceptance with God, but that on the contrary, they are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, which, in effect, never exists for any length of time without them. Distinctions, nice indeed, and in the eyes of superficial thinkers in religion always apparently frivolous, though they are inseparably connected with the true relief of burdened consciences, and though they directly tend not only to undermine the whole system of papal fallacy, but also to promote true holiness of heart and life.—But of this same Marsilius, who saw so clearly an

* Fox, Acts and Monum. Vol. I. p. 443.

essential branch of Evangelical truth, I rather conjecture than affirm, that he had the spirit of a wise and holy reformer.

About the same time, that is, about the middle of this century, Conrade Hager, in the city of Herbipoli*, taught for the space of twenty-four years together, that the Mass was not properly a sacrifice for sin; and of consequence was of no avail either to the living or to the dead for their acceptance with God; and therefore that the money bestowed on the priests for masses in behalf of the deceased, was pregnant with superstitious abominations. It is probable, that he taught also good doctrine, as well as opposed that which was evil. He was condemned as a heretic, and imprisoned; but history is silent concerning the issue of his afflictions.

In general, however, the great defect of those who withstood the reigning corruptions of these times, was this; they distinctly complained of the fashionable abominations, but were very scanty in describing the real evangelical doctrines, which alone can relieve and sanctify the souls of men. This remark is but too applicable to the very best of the Reformers, who appeared in Europe from this time till the era of the REFORMATION. That was a work, which well deserved its name, because it builded up as well as pulled down, and presented the church with a new fabric, as well as demolished the old. It was a work, in which the characters of a Divine influence appeared far more completely than in any of the former attempts against popery; and therefore its effects were lasting.—They remain to this day.

But THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS IS NOT TO BE DESPISED†.

In this century, and probably towards the close of it, the Ploughman's Complaint appeared in England; a tract, which, with much zeal and energy, described the reigning abuses, and which, probably, was not without effect.

Richard Fizraf‡ was one of the most eminent confessors in this age. He was brought up at Oxford, and promoted by Edward III. to the archbishopric of Armagh

The Ploughman's Complaint.

* Fox, Acts and Monum. p. 445. † Zech. iv. ‡ Fox, p. 464, &c.

in Ireland. He distinguished himself by opposing the pretensions of the Mendicant orders ; who, armed with papal authority, encroached on the rights of the secular clergy, and prevented them from the exercise of godly discipline. “I have,” said he, “in my diocese of Armagh, about two thousand persons, who stand condemned by the censures of the church, denounced every year against murderers, thieves, and such like malefactors, of all which numbers scarcely fourteen have applied to me or my clergy for absolution. Yet they all receive the sacraments, as others do, because they are absolved, or pretend to be absolved, by friars.”

Nor was this the only point in which Fizraf opposed the Mendicants. He withstood their practice of begging ; and maintained, that it is every man's duty to support himself by honest labour ;—that it forms no part of Christian wisdom and holiness for men to profess themselves Mendicants,—that to subsist by begging ought to be matter of necessity, never of choice,—that the Son of God, as he never taught such doctrine, so he never practised it in his own person,—and that, though he was always poor when on earth, he never was a beggar. This was to strike at the root of the pretended sanctity of the friars, who were enraged to find the very practice in which they gloried as matter of extraordinary virtue, represented as in its own nature unlawful. Fizraf was therefore cited by the friars to appear before pope Innocent VI. and to give an account of the doctrine, which he had broached and maintained both in the pulpit and in conversation. The archbishop obeyed ; and, in the presence of the pope, defended at large the rights of parochial ministers against the intrusion of the Mendicants, and exposed the various enormities of the latter. What effect his defence had on the mind of the pope does not distinctly appear. It is certain, however, that this confessor was persecuted both by civil and ecclesiastical powers, and underwent a variety of hardships. In a certain confession or prayer which our martyrologist* saw, and intended, as he tells us, to publish, Fizraf describes the history of his own life, and particularly declares

Fizraf opposes the Mendicants.

* Fox.

how the Lord had instructed him, and brought him out of the vanities of Aristotelian subtilty to the study of the Scriptures. The beginning of the prayer in Latin is given us by Fox, and deserves to be translated: "To Thee be praise, glory and thanksgiving, O Jesus most holy, most powerful, most amiable, who hast said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life;' a way without aberration, truth without a cloud, and life without end. For thou hast shown to me the way; thou hast taught me the truth; and thou hast promised me life. Thou wast my way in exile, thou wast my truth in counsel, and thou wilt be my life in reward."

This holy person was seven or eight years in banishment, and died in that situation, having defended his tenets by words and by writings to his death. Of his refutation of the reigning abuses the account is large, but to us, at least at this day, tedious and unnecessary; of his Christian spirit, doctrine and sufferings, the account is very brief, but I think sufficient to show, that GOD WAS WITH HIM.

About the year 1372, pope Gregory XI. dispatched a bull to the archbishop of Prague, in which he commanded him to excommunicate Militzius, a Bohemian. This man had belonged to some religious order at Prague, and having forsaken it, had given himself to preaching, and had certain congregations following him. Among these were several harlots, who being converted from their wickedness, now led a godly life. Militzius was wont to say of them, that in religious attainments they were superior to all the nuns in Christendom. Another of his assertions, which provoked the indignation of pope Gregory was, that Antichrist was already come. In his writings, he declared, that he was moved by the Holy Spirit, to search out by the Scriptures, concerning the coming of Antichrist. Little more is recorded concerning this confessor, than that he was at length silenced and imprisoned by the archbishop of Prague.

There were others who opposed the corruptions of the times; but the account is too obscure and scanty to be interesting. He who loves to see the practical power of

Divine truth, would wish, not only that opposition should be made to Antichrist, but much more that the positive marks of Christian godliness should be manifest. Both in private and in public life there were, doubtless, some sincere servants of God and his Christ; and I wish I could gratify the mind of the pious reader with an instructive relation of them. But of such men history is almost silent. APPARENT RARI NANTES IN GURGITE VASTO.—However, in the dearth of faithful and intelligent Christians, a brief review of the character and writings of Thomas Bradwardine will not only afford gratification, but excite surprize.—He appears to have been an extraordinary man; and has left behind him unequivocal marks of real holiness.

C H A P. II.

THOMAS BRADWARDINE.

THIS learned and pious person is supposed to have been born about the middle of the reign of king Edward I. He was of Merton College, Oxford, and was one of the proctors of that university in 1325. He excelled in mathematical knowledge, and was in general distinguished for his accurate and solid investigations in divinity. There was a depth in his researches, which entitled him to the name of “the PROFOUND*.” He seems to have been so devoted to a recluse and sedentary life, that very little has come down to us concerning his conduct and transactions. He was confessor to king Edward III. and attended that monarch in his French wars. It is observed that he often preached before the army. On occasion of a vacancy in the see of Canterbury, the monks of that city chose him archbishop; but Edward, who was fond of his company, refused to part with him. Another vacancy happening soon after, the monks elected him a second time, and Edward yielded to their desires. The modesty and innocence of his manners, and his unquestionable piety and integrity, seem to have been the principal causes of his advancement. He was, however,

* Bradwardine’s Life, prefixed to his Works.

by no means adapted to a court ; and soon found himself out of his element. His personal manners and deportment were the object of derision to the courtiers ; and when he was consecrated at Avignon, cardinal Hugh, a nephew of the pope, ridiculed the prelate, by introducing into the hall a person habited as a peasant riding on an ass, petitioning the pope to make him archbishop of Canterbury *. This was one of “ the spurns which patient merit of the unworthy takes.” But the jest was found not to answer the ungenerous views of him who made it. It appeared to the assembly, that solid learning and understanding, though destitute of exterior accomplishments, when clothed with piety and humility, as in Bradwardine’s case, were by no means proper subjects of ridicule and contempt. The pope and his cardinals resented the indignity, and frowned on the insolent contriver.

Bradwardine was consecrated in 1349, in the twenty-third year of Edward III. ;—but not many weeks after his consecration, and only seven days after his return into England, he died at Lambeth. His departure out of life seems to have been a providential mercy to himself. For we may well doubt whether his elevation would have increased either his comfort or his reputation. He, who, before his promotion, was judged of all men the most worthy to preside in the Church, would in all probability, partly on account of the habits of a studious life, and partly on account of the complexion of the times, have soon been deemed unequal to the office. In the early periods of the Church he might have shone with distinguished lustre ; but a pious archbishop, of simple manners, could have done little service to the Church in that age.

His great work was “ Concerning the Cause of God against Pelagius.” An admirable performance ! whether one considers the force of his genius, the solidity of his reasoning powers, or the energy of his devotion. In reviewing it, it gave me great satisfaction to observe, that the Spirit of God had not forsaken the Church ; but, on the contrary, in one of the darkest periods had raised up a defender of divine truth, who might have done honour

* Henry’s Hist. of England, Fourteenth century.

to the brightest. Abstracted from the spirit of the times in which he lived, Bradwardine gave himself up to the investigation of real gospel-truth; and he published to the world, in a large volume, the fruit of his researches. Some few extracts may give the reader a just idea of his doctrine and spirit; and may also throw some light on the state of religion in the age in which he lived.

In the preface he lays open his heart, and explains the exercise of his mind on the great subject of divine grace, which he attempts to defend against the supporters of the doctrine of free-will; a term which I have repeatedly observed to be improper; and which, as used by him, and by most, if not all, of the fathers, who really loved Evangelical truth, means much the same as self-sufficiency. Bradwardine had observed how very few in his days appeared to be conscious of their need of the Holy Spirit to renew their natures; and being himself deeply sensible of the* desperate wickedness of the human heart, and of the preciousness of the grace of Christ, he seems to have overlooked or little regarded the fashionable superstitions of his time, and to have applied the whole vigour and vehemence of his spirit to the defence of the foundations of the Gospel. But let us hear him speak for himself.

“As I am somewhat encouraged by the countenance of those who love the cause of God, so I own I am discouraged by the opposition of those who embrace the cause of Pelagius, who are, alas! far more numerous. For behold, I speak it with real grief of heart, as formerly 850 prophets, with the addition of numbers of the populace without end, were united against one prophet of the Lord, so at this day, how many, O Lord, contend for free-will against thy gratuitous grace, and against St. Paul the spiritual champion of grace! How many indeed in our times despise thy saving grace; and maintain, that free-will suffices for salvation! or if they use the term grace, how do they boast, that they deserve it by the strength of free-will; so that grace in their eyes appears to be sold at a price, and not freely conferred from above! How many, presuming on the power of their own free-will, refuse thy influence in their operations, saying, with the ungodly,

* Jerem. xvii. 9.

depart from us ! How many, extolling the liberty of their own will, refuse thy service ; or, if with their lips they own that thou co-operatest with them, how do they, like the proud, disobedient, angels of old, who hated thee, refuse that thou shouldst reign over them ! Nay, prouder than Satan, and not content to esteem themselves thy equals, they most arrogantly boast, that they reign above thee, the King of kings. For they fear not to maintain, that their own will in common actions goes before as the mistress, that thine follows as a handmaid ; that they go before as lords, that thou followest as a servant ; that they as kings command, and that thou as a subject obeyest. How many support Pelagianism with clamour, raillery, and derision ! Almost the whole world is gone after Pelagius into error. Arise, O Lord, judge thy own cause : Sustain him who undertakes to defend thy truth ; protect, strengthen, and comfort me. For thou knowest, that, no where relying on my own strength, but trusting in thine, I, a weak worm, attempt to maintain so great a cause."

From the vehemence of his complaints it appears, that together with the triumphant progress of superstition, the Christian world had made rapid advances in self-sufficiency. The scholastic learning, which was ardently cultivated, had enlisted itself on the side of Pelagianism, or at least of semi-Pelagianism. Those who were not hardy enough to maintain the merit of condignity, yet strenuously held the merit of congruity, which was indeed the favourite theme of the fashionable divines. By its assistance they arrogated to themselves the merit of doing certain good actions, which would render it meet and equitable that God should confer saving grace on their hearts *. This is that grace of congruity which the Church of England condemns in her 13th Article ; and it was precisely one of those contrivances, by which the natural pride of a heart unacquainted with its own total apostacy endeavours to support its dignity, and to prevent an ingenuous confession of helplessness and of complete unworthiness. History shows this sentiment to be perfectly semi-Pelagian. "Inward preventing grace, say that sect, is not necessary

* Condignity implies merit ; and, of course, claims reward on the score of justice. Congruity pretends only to a sort of imperfect qualification for the gift and reception of God's grace.

to form in the soul the first beginnings of true repentance and amendment; every one is capable of producing these by the mere power of his natural faculties, as also of exercising faith in Christ, and of forming the purposes of a holy and sincere obedience." But they acknowledge also, that "none can persevere or advance in that holy and virtuous course, without the perpetual support and the powerful assistance of grace*."

Something like this seems to be the religion natural to man as a fallen creature, when he "leans to his own understanding," and derives not his creed from divine revelation; and when at the same time he is not advanced by a more uncommon degree of hardihood into the pride of perfect Pelagianism. On this plan, Bradwardine thinks, that God is made the servant, man the master; and it is remarkable, that a poet of our own who seems to have embraced this scheme, admits the same thought, when he says,

Heaven but persuades, Almighty man decrees;
Man is the maker of immortal Fates †.

I am sensible, how much has been said, and may be said with great plausibility, in support of the poet's doctrine. But it is perfectly foreign to the design of this history, to enter into so boundless a field of controversy. Suffice it once more to refer the reader to Edwards' treatise on the Freedom of the Will, for a full and complete confutation of the scheme. I shall only add, that all truly humble souls, whose consciences have felt the force of Christian doctrine, are assuredly persuaded that their salvation is altogether of grace from first to last, by the certain testimony not only of Scripture ‡, but also of their own experience, though they may never have formally discussed the controversy before us. Such a soul, if I mistake not, was that of Bradwardine; and as he was conscious of the pernicious tendency of SELF-SUFFICIENCY, he writes from a heart inflamed with zeal for the divine

* Mosheim, Vol. I. p. 277.

† Young's Night Thoughts, Night 7.

‡ "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do." Philipp. ii. 12, 13.—This very important passage of Scripture, while it demonstrates both the necessity and the efficacy of Divine Grace, shows at the same time, that the Holy Spirit nevertheless operates on the mind of man as a rational creature, possessed of will and understanding.

glory, and labouring with charitable concern for the souls of men.

Bradwardine goes on in his preface to inform us, how he had prayed, and with what strength and consolation he had been favoured. His spirit appears to have been under the steady influence of humility and piety, while he was reflecting on the subject. After having described the opposition made to divine grace from age to age, he thus concludes : “ I know, O Lord God, that thou dost not despise nor forsake those who love thee, but thou dost sustain, teach, cherish, strengthen, and confirm them. Relying on this thy goodness and truth, I undertake to war under thy invincible banners.”

The treatise itself is worthy of him who was called the **PROFOUND**. The author appears to have been endowed with a strong argumentative mind ; but the work is too metaphysical for the perusal of ordinary readers, nor would it answer any valuable purpose to present the reader with a regular abridgment of its contents. The mode of writing in that age was tedious and prolix beyond measure ; and it must be ascribed to the infection of the scholastic turn of those times, that Bradwardine wrote against the errors of the schoolmen in their own style and manner. He possessed not the useful qualification of writing in a plain scriptural manner, and of making use of arguments equally capable of impressing all ranks of men. The popular talent of perspicuously displaying divine truths, and of happily illustrating them by proofs drawn from Scripture and experience, was at that time hardly known in Christendom.

Some concise observations however, and a selection of a few remarkable passages, may give the reader an idea of the nature of the work.

He undertakes to lay before mourning penitents the consolations of the Gospel ; and, particularly, to animate and cheer the hearts of those who are ready to despair on account of the greatness of their transgressions*. He tells us that some Jews once declared to him, that those who had sinned four times repeatedly, were entirely excluded from all possi-

Bradwardine against Pelagius.

* Book I. p. 20.

bility of pardon, grounding their notion on the expression several times repeated in the first chapter of Amos, "for three transgressions, and for four." Against this mean conceit, worthy of a rabbinical taste, he shows the immensity of the divine perfections of goodness and mercy, and represents them as far surpassing the limited evils of man, provided the sinner repent and humbly come to God.

"Josephus* tells us, says he, that the Sadducees thought it a glorious thing to contend against the renowned doctors of their nation in philosophical points: thus, at this day, I fear very many seek glory, by overturning or seeming to overturn the constructions and interpretations of others. They, who have not a single house or cottage† of their own erection, are peculiarly infected with the love of glory; they are indeed the bolder in dismantling the buildings of others, because they are in no fear of retaliation, as they have nothing of their own to lose." So exactly similar have sceptics been in all ages! for example, the Sadducees in the time of Josephus, the Pelagians in the time of Bradwardine, and those who at this day arrogate to themselves exclusively the credit of being RATIONAL in religion. Dubious and hesitating in regard to their own systems, vehement and decisive against the systems of others, they even glory that they have not yet completed their own creed, while they condemn as bigots all who profess to have determinate articles of faith, as if the perfection of wisdom lay in reasoning against every thing, and in determining nothing; or as if the Scripture was not a form of sound words, which we ought to hold fast without wavering, so far as it reveals to us the doctrines of God and the path of duty. Bradwardine observing, that a disputatious and sceptical spirit resulted from the pride of the heart, prays earnestly for a heaven-taught simplicity of mind; and while he takes notice, that God despises the proud, he thankfully owns that he visits, illuminates, and rejoices with the simple.

Sir Henry Savile, the learned editor of the principal work of Bradwardine, informs us, that this extraordinary

* P. 145.

† This metaphorical language is used by Bradwardine against the boasting critics of his own day, to denote their poverty of invention in religious subjects.

man devoted his main application to the study of theology and mathematics; and that particularly in the latter he distanced, perhaps, the most skilful of his contemporaries. In proof of these assertions the editor refers to several of Bradwardine's mathematical tracts, and to a large manuscript volume of astronomical tables, which sir Henry had then in his own possession, and considered as a very elaborate and valuable performance. But in divinity, says he, "this single treatise which I now publish, will be a lasting monument of his superior talents. It was written in support of the cause of God against the Pelagian heresy, which experience shows to be a growing evil in every age. The substance of the work had been delivered in lectures at Oxford; and the author, at the request of the students of Merton College, arranged, enlarged, and polished them, while he was chancellor of the diocese of London. No sooner was this performance given to the public, than it was received with the greatest applause of all learned doctors, and found its way into almost every library throughout Europe. As Bradwardine was a very excellent mathematician, he endeavoured to treat theological subjects with a mathematical accuracy; and was the first divine, as far as I know, who pursued that method. Hence this book against Pelagianism is one regular connected series of reasoning, from principles or conclusions which have been demonstrated before.

"If, in the several lemmas and propositions, a mathematical accuracy is not on all occasions completely preserved, the reader must remember to ascribe the defect to the nature of the subject, rather than to the author."

This account of the extreme singularity of Bradwardine's taste appeared worthy of notice.

It has already been concisely observed*, that Bradwardine attended king Edward the third in his French wars, and that he often preached before the army. His biographer, sir Henry, is more particular: he tells us, that some writers of that time attributed the signal victories of Edward, rather to the virtues and holy character of his chaplain and confessor Bradwardine, than to the bravery or prudence of the monarch or of any other person. "He

* Page 219.

made it his business to calm and mitigate the fierceness of his master's temper, when he saw him either immoderately fired with warlike rage, or improperly flushed with the advantages of victory. He also often addressed the army; and with so much meekness, and persuasive discretion, as to restrain them from those insolent excesses which are too frequently the attendants of military success."

Bradwardine's treatise against the Pelagians, which is so much extolled by sir H. Savile, is a folio of almost nine hundred pages. It may not be disagreeable to the reader to peruse a few additional extracts, on account of the important matter they contain, and the mathematical accuracy of manner which this author constantly endeavours to support, and which is, in general, so unusual in the treating of such subjects.

OF THE DIVINE BEING.

Among the first positions which he undertakes to prove, are these. That God is not contingently, but necessarily perfect. That he is incapable of changing. That he is not liable, for example, to the emotions of joy, sorrow, anger; or, in any respect passive. Since, if he were, he would be changeable; whereas God is always the same, and never varies. He cannot change for the better, because he is already perfectly good. Neither can he change for the worse, because he is necessarily perfect, and therefore cannot cease to be so. Lastly, he cannot change to a state equally good, because such an alteration could answer no end, and would in reality imply some defect*.

He observes, that the DIVINE WILL is universally efficacious, which, he contends, is a mark of much higher perfection, than if his will could be frustrated, hindered, or miss of its intent. If it were possible for God to wish any thing, and yet not bring it to pass, he would and must from that moment cease to be perfectly happy; especially as it is impossible that he should choose any thing but what is right.

CONCERNING MERIT.

Most powerfully he beats down the doctrine of HUMAN MERIT. He will not allow that men can merit at the

* Lib. I. cap. 1.

hand of God, either antecedently or subsequently; that is, either prior to grace received, or after it. Is it not more bountiful to give than to barter? to bestow a thing freely, and for nothing, than for the sake of any preceding or subsequent desert, which would be a sort of price? Even a generous man often confers benefits on others, without any view to the previous or succeeding merit of the object. Much more does God do this, who is infinitely richer in bounty, than the most liberal of his creatures*.

Has not TRUTH itself declared, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." And does not the Apostle of truth use the words, "In him we live, move, and have our being!"—I therefore repeat, That it must be manifest to every one, who has a sound understanding, 1. That no thing whatever can put any other thing into motion, unless God himself, by his own proper influence, give motion to the thing so moved. 2. That no thing whatever can put any other into motion, without God's being the immediate mover of it. And even, 3. That whatsoever is put in motion by any thing else, is more immediately moved by God himself than by the instrument which sets it in motion, be that instrument what it will. Now, if any person should cavil at this doctrine, and say, That this argument would make the Supreme Being the author of many actions, even wicked actions, which are not fit to be named, the answer is, The words which express those actions are not to be taken strictly or absolutely, but only as they relate to the creature, not as descriptive of the real essence of the actions, but only of their nature when viewed as the effects of human powers. In every formation and in every motion there must be some unoriginated former; else the process would be endless †.

It should be remembered, that the historian never pretends to dictate to his reader, nor even to explain his own opinion on these intricate subjects. He only ventures to lay before him the judgment of an excellent christian, and a most acute metaphysician of the fourteenth century.

* Lib. I. cap. 1.

† Ibid. cap. 4 & 5.

OF THE DIVINE KNOWLEDGE.

What Bradwardine delivers concerning the KNOWLEDGE of God is worthy of the utmost attention.

It is certain, that God hath a knowledge of all things present, of all things past, and of all things to come; which knowledge is, in the highest sense, actual, particular, distinct, and infallible. It may be considered as either simple, or approbative. His simple or absolute knowledge extends to every thing. His knowledge of approbation, over and above the former, includes his good pleasure and complacency of will. He produces Scripture in support of this distinction of the divine knowledge, as Matt. xxv. 12. Verily I say unto you, I KNOW you not. And 1 Cor. viii. 3. If any man love God, he is KNOWN of him *.

The fifteenth chapter of the first book is wholly taken up in proving, THAT THINGS KNOWN are not the foundation of the knowledge of God. Knowledge is a principal perfection in God. If therefore HIS knowledge were derived from the objects with which it is conversant, it would follow that a part of the perfection of God was derived from some other source than himself, in which case HE must cease to be self-perfect. He would moreover cease to be all-sufficient: he would stand in need of created help to render his knowledge complete. And how could his glory be unrivalled, if any portion of it were suspended on borrowed assistance? Add to this, if the things that are known by God, are verily the producing cause of his knowing them, they must be antecedent to his knowledge, either in the order of time, or of nature. But they are not prior to his knowledge in either of these respects; for they are all created in time; whereas God and his knowledge are eternal. Besides, if the Deity received any degree of his intelligence from the beings he has made, he would cease to be purely active; he would be passive in that reception. Whence it would also follow that he must be susceptible of change. Nay, he would degenerate into a sort of inferiority to the things known; and being dependent on them for his knowledge, he would, so far, be less noble than they.

* Lib. I. cap. 6 & 7.

The Divine Understanding would, like ours, be occasionally in a state of suspense and fluctuation. God might be said to possess rather the power or capability of knowing, than knowledge itself. He would only be disposed to know either this or that indifferently as the thing might turn, and would be actuated and determined by agencies and casualties extraneous to himself. And thus he would neither be the highest nor the first. For these reasons Aristotle and Averroes were right in affirming that the Divine knowledge is perfect as it exists in God himself, and neither is nor can be improved by any things that are known. In a similar manner, also, argues Peter Lombard. If the things, says he, which God knows, were the basis of the Divine knowledge, it would follow, that creatures contributed to improve their Maker's wisdom; and thus foolish man, or even the meanest beast of the field, would be exalted into an assistant, a counsellor, and a teacher of the all-wise God. Lastly, the testimony of Augustine is very much in point: God, says he, knows all his creatures, both corporeal and incorporeal, not because they exist; for he was not ignorant of what he intended to create; but they therefore exist, because he foreknew them. Amidst the innumerable revolutions of advancing and departing ages, the knowledge of God is neither lessened nor augmented. No incident can possibly arise, which THOU, THOU, who knowest all things, didst not expect and foresee; and every created nature is what it is, in consequence of thy knowing it as such.

Neither are we to understand our profound scholar, as though he were contending for the mere ABSTRACT KNOWLEDGE of God as a principle of causation. No: according to him, the efficacy of the Divine knowledge depends on the sovereign irresistibility of the Divine will. The will of God, says he, in his tenth chapter, is universally efficacious, and invincible, and necessitates as a cause. It cannot be impeded, much less defeated, by any means whatever.

The following argument is expressed in terms remarkably concise and nervous.

If you allow, 1. That God is ABLE to do a thing, and, 2. That he is WILLING to do a thing; then, 3. I affirm,

THAT thing will not, cannot go unaccomplished. God either does it now, or will certainly do it at the destined season, otherwise he must either lose his power, or change his mind. HE is in want of nothing to carry his purposes into execution. Hence the remark of the philosopher, *Si potuit et voluit, egit*. He that hath will and power to do a thing, certainly doth that thing. Again, if the will of God may be frustrated, the defeat would arise from the created wills of men or angels; but we can never allow any created will, angelic or human, to be superior to the will of the Creator. Both the Divine knowledge and the Divine will are altogether unchangeable, since if either one or the other were to undergo an alteration, a change must take place in God himself.

OF FATE.

The sentiments of Bradwardine respecting FATE are evidently the result of profound thinking.

Many persons affirm the existence of fate; and many, particularly of the catholic doctors, deny there is any such thing. The Stoics are advocates for fate; on the contrary, Augustine reprobates the idea of it, as inconsistent with a sound faith. The truth seems to be this: If by fate is to be understood an inevitable, coercive necessity, arising from the influence of the heavenly bodies, such a notion is not to be maintained: but if the word be taken in a lower sense, as implying, for example, only a disposition, or propensity in men to certain actions, this sentiment, with certain explanations, may be supported; and most certainly the idea of a Divine fate must be admitted, whether we consider the word as derived from *FIAT* or from *FANDO*. Is it not written, that in the beginning of the creation God said, *fiat lux*, let there be light, and there was light? Is it not written again, *HE SPAKE* and it was done? Now this Divine fate is chiefly a branch of the Divine will, which is the efficacious cause of all things. Augustine was of the same mind. "All that connexion," says he, "and that train of causes, whereby every thing is what it is, are by the Stoics called Fate; the whole of which fate is to be ascribed to the will and power of the Supreme Being, who most justly is believed

to foreknow all things, and to leave nothing unordained. The energy of the Divine will is unconquerably extended through all things. . . . We never reject that chain of causes, wherein the will of God has the grand sway. We avoid however giving it the name of fate; unless indeed you derive the word from *fando*, that is, from *SPEAKING*. For we cannot but acknowledge, that it is written in the Scriptures, God hath *ONCE* spoken, and these two things have I heard, that power belongeth unto God; and that mercy is with thee, for thou wilt render unto every man according to his works. Now, when it is said, God hath *SPOKEN ONCE*, the meaning is, that he hath spoken unchangeably and irreversibly, even as he foreknew all things that should come to pass. The kingdoms of men are absolutely appointed by Divine Providence; which if any one is desirous for that reason to attribute to fate, meaning by that word, the will and power of God, let him hold fast the *SENTIMENT* and only correct the *PHRASE*." Bradwardine concludes his chapter on Fate with the following remarkable quotation from Augustine: "But though the Supreme Being is the undoubted origin of every determined train of causes, it by no means follows that nothing is in the power of the human will. For our wills themselves belong to those trains of causes, which are definitively fixed and arranged in the Divine mind; and it is in that way that they become the causes of human actions. Our wills have just so much power as God willed and foreknew they should have; and consequently whatever be the precise degree of the power which they possess, that they absolutely must possess, and that they inevitably must exert; for both their powers and their operations were foreknown of God, whose foreknowledge cannot be deceived*."

These examples may be sufficient to convey some idea of the acuteness of the reasoning powers of Bradwardine; and the intelligent reader will be at no loss to understand in what manner the conclusions of this celebrated theologian bear upon certain controverted points in divinity, and particularly upon the Pelagian system! Our author closely follows the advocates of that heresy through all

* Lib. I. cap. 28.

their intricate windings; and exposes their antichristian sophisms and subterfuges with infinite patience and address. Of course his subject leads him to examine and discuss in a very copious manner that most difficult of all enquiries, the nature of the human will, and of liberty and necessity. Large and instructive extracts might easily be produced on these points from his second book; but as they would detain us too long, it will be more expedient to take our leave of the treatise, after having selected a passage or two, which are more of a practical nature, and yet altogether related to the Pelagian dispute.

ON TEMPTATION.

The human will, without a supply of the special assistance of God, cannot conquer so much as a single temptation. And this special assistance Bradwardine expressly says is not free-will, but the UNCONQUERABLE will of God. "Armed with this, his tempted children get the better of every temptation; destitute of this, they are constantly defeated. Besides, if man could overcome temptation by his own power, it would be vain and idle in him to pray to God for victory over it, or to give him thanks for victory obtained." Lib. II. cap. 5.

ON GRACE.

Every creature is indebted to Almighty God for various gifts; and these gifts may with sufficient propriety be called the Grace of God, grace freely given. But, with very great thankfulness, we ought further to observe, that there is such a thing as a peculiar species of this free grace, which makes a man accepted of God, makes him a friend of God, and dear to him; makes him his child for the present, and a partaker of his glory in heaven. Now, continues he, the mischievous Pelagians maintain that this sort of grace is not given freely by God, but is to be obtained by preceding merits. I myself was once so foolish and empty, when I first applied myself to the study of philosophy, as to be seduced by this error. For whenever I attended to the manner in which the divines handled this point, I own the Pelagian hypothesis appeared to me the more likely to be true. In the schools of the philosophers I rarely heard a single word said con-

cerning grace, unless indeed sometimes an equivocal expression might drop from the disputants, but nothing further. Whereas my ears were assailed, the day through, with such assertions as, "We are the masters of our own free actions: It is in our own power to do well or ill, and to have virtues or vices." And when I heard those parts of the Scriptures read in the church, which extol the grace of God and lower the free-will of man, for example, "It is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy," and many similar passages, this doctrine of grace was very disagreeable to my ungrateful mind. But afterwards, when I reflected on the nature of the Divine character, on the knowledge of God, and his prescience, I began to perceive some few distant rays of light respecting this matter, even before I became a regular attendant of the lectures in divinity. I seemed to see, but by no means clearly, that the grace of God is prior, both in nature and in time, to any good actions that men can possibly perform; and I return thanks to God, from whom proceeds every good thing, for thus freely enlightening my understanding. St. Augustine confesses that he himself had been formerly in a similar mistake. "I was once," says he, "a Pelagian in my principles. I thought that faith towards God was not the gift of God, but that we procured it by our own powers, and that then, through the use of it, we obtained the gifts of God; I never supposed that the preventing grace of God was the proper cause of our faith, till my mind was struck in a particular manner by the Apostle's argument and testimony,—What hast thou that thou hast not received, and if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it? My mind had been puffed up with worldly books, worldly wisdom, and worldly knowledge; but after that my heart was visited with the influences of Divine Grace, I grasped with the greatest eagerness the sacred writings which were dictated by the Holy Spirit; and above the rest, those of the apostle Paul. Then fell to the ground all my objections, and all the apparent contradictions in the Scriptures. The Bible spoke to my mind one simple language of pure truth, and with this additional praise of Divine Grace

constantly inculcated,—that no man should glory as though he had not received.”—Bradwardine then proceeds to say,

In this whole business I follow the steps of Augustine as closely as I can, for he alone appears to me to be both the true apostolic logician and philosopher; and certainly he is very different from many learned doctors. The great point to be maintained is, that God gives his grace **FREELY** in the strictest sense of the word, and without merit on the part of man. For if God did not bestow his grace in this perfectly gratuitous manner, but on account of some subordinate contingent uncertain cause, He could not possibly foresee how he should bestow his free gifts. The word grace evidently implies that there is no antecedent merit: And in this way the apostle to the Romans appears to argue, when he says, “And if by grace, then it is no more of works. Otherwise grace is no more grace. Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.” All this is perfectly intelligible even in the conduct of liberal and magnificent **HUMAN** characters. They frequently bestow their gifts from a pure spirit of liberality, without the smallest previous claim on the score of merit. And shall not God, whose perfections are infinite, do more than this? St. Paul says, that God commended his love to us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us: And that when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. St. Paul was in a peculiar manner a child of grace: with gratitude therefore he honours and extols its efficacy in all his epistles; and particularly in his epistle to the Romans, throughout he defends his doctrines with great precision and copiousness. “Every mouth,” says he, “must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God. By the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified: Men must be justified freely by his grace. By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Pelagius objects in the following manner; If grace be perfectly free, and if all men be alike, why is grace given to this man and not to that? Augustine, on a similar occasion, exposes the wildness of such reasoning

thus: You might as well say, "I am a man; Christ was a man; why am not I the same as He? We have a common nature; and with God there is no respect of persons: why then are his gifts so different? Would any Christian, nay, would any madman argue so? and yet the principles of Pelagius would carry us this length." Again, the Pelagians produce such scriptures as these; "The Lord is with you while ye be with him, and if ye seek him he will be found of you*." "Turn ye, and I will turn unto you†." From which they would infer, that the grace of God is proportioned to the merits of men. But all this would be to no purpose, if they would but compare one scripture with another: for example, "Turn us, O God of our salvation‡; and after that I was turned, I repented§: And, Turn us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned||." Undoubtedly such expressions as, Turn yourselves, &c. . . . relate to the free power which every man has to WILL; but if Pelagius had half an eye, he might see, that God, in giving the precept which directs us to turn unto him, influences also the human will, and excites it to action, not indeed in opposition to our free choice, but the reverse, as I have all along maintained. Hence it is written, Without me ye can do nothing. And again, I have laboured more abundantly than you all, yet not I but the grace of God within me. And lastly, I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; and I will cleanse you from your idols. A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart, and will give you a heart of flesh. Lib. I. cap. 35.

LOVE, PATIENCE, HUMILITY, AND THANKSGIVING,

Are the subjects of the thirty-fourth chapter of the second book. And these are handled with great force and eloquence. A short specimen is given in pp. 241, &c. of this History. It may be worth while to subjoin a few sentences more, for the purpose of showing how steadily the author keeps his eye on the mischiefs of Pelagianism.

* 2 Chron. xv. 2.

§ Jer. xxxi. 19.

† Zech. i. 3.

|| Lam. v. 21.

‡ Psalm lxxxv. 4.

I know, says he, O Lord, I know, and with grief I relate, that there are certain proud Pelagians, who choose rather to trust in themselves than in God. They think that if they have but free-will, and are the sole masters of their own actions, they are sufficiently safe, and have a good foundation for hope. O ye vain children of men, why will ye use a false balance? why will ye trust in yourselves, who are covered with sins, miseries, and defects, rather than in HIM, who is infinitely good and compassionate, and plenteous in his inestimable donations? Why will ye not place your hopes on HIS happy government, who cannot err; and no longer on yourselves, who continually err and stray like lost sheep? Why rely on your own diminutive, infirm, and fragile powers; and not on his Almighty help, whose strength is boundless and irresistible? Beware of the prophet's curse, Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. "I am astonished," says St. Augustine, "that, notwithstanding the Apostle declares, It is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure,—men can choose rather to rely on their own debility, than on the strength of the Divine promise." But ye will tell me, that in regard to myself, the Divine promise is altogether uncertain. Be it so: What then? Can ye depend upon your own will so as to be assured of your future salvation? What, have ye no fears on that head? Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. Since then there may be uncertainty in either way, why not place your faith, hope, and charity, where there is stability, and good ground for dependence? Strange doctrine of the Pelagians! Tell men, say they, of the greatness of their own natural powers, and such preaching will excite them to virtue; but when ye inform them that nothing is to be done without the compassion, the help, and the grace of God, ye break their spirits, and drive them to despair. Thus have they that confidence in their own insignificant powers, which all holy men have in the boundless mercy of God; and thus do the former declare war against those very free gifts of God, by the assistance of which

the latter successfully fight against their innate corruptions. O Pelagians, how is it, that ye, who fancy yourselves so acute, do not see the dilemma into which your opinions necessarily bring you? Either ye rob the Almighty of his prescience, or if ye admit that attribute, ye must at the same time admit the conclusiveness of this reasoning. Ye desire to have ground for hope; it is my prayer that ye should; but let your hope be in the Lord. For my part, it is good for me to draw near to God, and to put my trust in the Lord God. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, whose hope the Lord is. It is this perfect confidence in God, which fortifies the mind of a good man against every species of adversity. He knows that God is most wise, just and compassionate, and that HE never falls into error; and he knows also that all things work together for good to them that love God. He learns therefore, with the Apostles and many other holy men, even to rejoice in sufferings.

A genuine love of God requires us to employ every faculty we possess, mental and corporeal, for the praise, honour, and glory of God; moreover, we ought freely to submit to every inconvenience and disadvantage, even to the irrecoverable loss of ourselves, rather than offend his Divine Majesty in the slightest degree.

Grant, I beseech thee, good Lord, that as I thus pronounce my duty with my lips, I may efficaciously perform the same, and persevere unto the end: and do Thou, I humbly beg, of thy great compassion, deign to accept this bounden service which thou hast prepared me to perform, as being the only recompense I can possibly make. More than this I neither have, nor ever shall have; unless, perhaps, it may be thought more, most earnestly to wish both to know and to do, under all circumstances, what is altogether agreeable to THY WILL. Grant that THIS also may be my heart's desire; and I humbly ask these things as a poor, miserable, mendicant sinner. Is there any thing farther than this for which I can ask? I do not see that there is, though I turn my thoughts every way: but if there be, I entreat thee, O Lord, with the most devout supplication, to answer my

prayer in this respect also ; that so, for thy unspeakable benefits bestowed freely upon me, I may make the most grateful return in my power, and manifest the feelings of my heart by incessant thanksgiving.

St. Augustine, one of thy most grateful children, observes, That whether we would use our minds in contemplation, or our mouths in speaking, or our pens in writing, we cannot be better employed than in giving thanks to God. It is not easy to produce a sentiment more concise in the expression, more pleasant to the ear, more grateful to the understanding, or more useful in practice. The same author was, no doubt, taught by Thee to say, That there is true wisdom in the worship of God, which very materially consists in gratitude. Hence we are particularly admonished in the Communion Service “ to give thanks to our Lord God.” Let us therefore humbly acknowledge that every good thing we possess is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights ; and with our whole heart let us give thanks to our Lord God continually.

He maintains the doctrine of a universal, decisive Providence ; and justly exposes the absurdity of the common language of mankind concerning Fortune*. He observes how often it is said in Scripture, that the Lord will put his fear into the hearts of the enemies of his people, will fight for his Church, will go before them, &c. He asserts, that God meant to show by these declarations†, that this is his general plan of government, which is always carried on by HIS energy, though that energy may be often invisible, or not accompanied with sensible miracles ; that the promises of divine support are specially applicable to spiritual conflicts ; as, in them more particularly, the Lord means to teach the impotent and the miserable where they should place their hope, and seek for strength, victory, and salvation. “ Let him,” says he, “ who likes not these things, hope in princes, trust in man, make flesh his arm, and in his heart depart from the Lord ; let him trust in his bow, let him fancy that his sword will save him ; and if he be successful, let him not return thanks, nor bless the Lord in hymns of grateful acknow-

* Page 267.

† Page 277.

ledgment, because he owes, forsooth, no obligation to him : and I no way doubt, but though he call himself a Christian, he will pay less regard to the true God, than a Pagan does to an idol, to whom he offers sacrifice. But, let others hope as they please, it is good for me, in every conflict, to hold fast by God."

He makes an excellent practical use of his doctrine of Providence*. "He, who excludes from his creed the view of Divine Providence, disposing of all events, not permissively, but actually, removes, so far as in him lies, from every troubled person the greatest encouragements to patience, hope, consolation, and joy. Who will serenely bear adversity, if he believe it to proceed from chance, or ultimately from an enemy ; and if he do not know that it really proceeds from, and is guided by, the unerring direction of the all-wise God, who, by means invisible to human sight, purges sins, exercises virtues, and accumulates rewards ? He, doubtless, who does thus believe in Divine Providence, has every advantage for patience and composure of mind, because he knows that all things work together for his good. Thus rough places are made smooth to all the saints of God, hard things are softened, the edge of suffering is blunted, and bitter things are tempered sweetly : And thus a singular solace, a principal and a never-failing refreshment, in all adversities, is provided for me, a sinful worm. With what patience may all disagreeable events be endured by the man who fears and loves God ; and firmly believes that the great and wise Being, who can require nothing but what is wise and good, actually requires him to bear such things ! This, I think, is to make the Lord's yoke easy, and his burden light.

The maxims of Bradwardine induced him to conclude, that whatever things come to pass, are brought about by the Providence of God †. Even a prudent master of a family, says he, takes care of every thing that belongs to him, and makes provision beforehand, according to the best of his knowledge and power ; and leaves nothing unregulated in his house, but exactly appoints the due time and place for every thing.

* Page 288.

† Lib. I. c. 27.

I find * that he agrees with the account, which has been given, concerning the author of the letter to Demetrius †. For he shows, that Augustine, in his first book against Pelagius and Celestius, asserts that letter to be the work of Pelagius, quoting and arguing against a part of it in the plainest terms, and that nothing can be a more groundless surmise than to ascribe the Epistle in question to Jerom. He also goes over the same ground which Augustine had gone over before him, in confuting Pelagianism.

He largely refutes the error, more famous than any other in his day, namely, that men, by their works, deserve grace of congruity ‡. “By this it is,” says he, “that men rush headlong into Pelagianism. Not content with gratuitous grace, men would have grace to be sold by God, though at a very cheap rate.” He proves, that men are naturally destitute of the least spark of genuine love to God, without which it seems impossible that they should have any claim upon him in any sense whatever. He also § disapproves the error of those, who contend, that grace is conferred on account of future merits foreseen.

He observes ||, that Robert, bishop of Lincoln, in his questions on the will of God, and in his other works, seems to favour Pelagianism, when he teaches, that the Supreme Being does never antecedently determine the free acts of the will, but that the will, in its own nature, possesses a self-determining power; and that the event may always be either compliance or non-compliance with those gracious influences by which God excites the mind to virtue.

The following is an extract of Bradwardine's devout meditations on the subjects discussed in the Treatise:—

“O great and wonderful Lord, our God, thou only Light of the eyes! open, I implore thee, the eyes of my heart, and of others my fellow-creatures, that we may truly understand and contemplate thy wondrous works! And the more thoroughly we comprehend them, the more may our minds be affected, in the contemplation, with pious reverence and profound devotion! Who is

* Page 312.

† Vol. II. chap. iv.

‡ Page 325.

§ Page 363.

|| Page 602. lib. ii.

not struck with awe in beholding thy all-powerful WILL, completely efficacious throughout every part of the creation? It is by this same sovereign and irresistible WILL, that whom, and when thou pleasest, thou bringest low and liftest up, killest and makest alive. How intense and how unbounded is thy love to me, O Lord! Whereas, my love, how feeble and remiss! My gratitude, how cold and inconstant! Far be it from thee, that thy love should ever resemble mine; for in every kind of excellence thou art consummate. O thou, who fillest heaven and earth, why fillest thou not this narrow heart? O human soul, low, abject, and miserable, whoever thou art, if thou be not fully replenished with the love of so great a Good, why dost thou not open all thy doors, expand all thy folds, extend all thy capacity, that, by the sweetness of love so great, thou mayest be wholly occupied, satiated, and ravished; especially, since, little as thou art, thou canst not be satisfied with the love of any Good inferior to the ONE SUPREME? Speak the word, that thou mayest become my God and most amiable in mine eyes, and it shall instantly be so, without the possibility of failure. What can be more efficacious to engage the affections, than preventing love? Most gracious Lord, by thy love thou hast prevented me, wretch that I am, who had no love for thee, but was at enmity with my Maker and Redeemer. I see, Lord, that it is easy to say and to write these things, but very difficult to execute them. Do thou, therefore, to whom nothing is difficult, grant, that I may more easily practise these things with my heart, than utter them with my lips: Open thy liberal hand, that nothing may be easier, sweeter, or more delightful to me, than to be employed in these things. Thou, who preventest thy servants with thy gracious love, Whom dost not thou elevate with the hope of finding thee? And, what canst thou deny to him who loves thee, who is in need, and who supplicates thy aid? Permit me, I pray, to reason with thy magnificent goodness, that my hopes may be enlarged. It is not the manner, even of human friendship, to reject a needy friend, especially when the ability to relieve is abundant.

“Why do we fear to preach the doctrine of the pre-

destination of saints, and of the genuine grace of God? Is there any cause to dread, lest man should be induced to despair of his condition, when his hope is demonstrated to be founded on God alone? Is there not much stronger reason for him to despair, if, in pride and unbelief, he founds his hope of salvation on himself?"

Such were the ardent breathings of soul in a studious and thoughtful scholar of the fourteenth century; who, unaided by human connexions, in an age dreary and unpromising throughout Europe, and in our own Island full of darkness, seems to have lived the life of faith on the Son of God. The light of the Waldensian doctrine had been all along confined to the Continent. But HE, who shows mercy, because he will show mercy, and who had, in some measure, paved the way to the more copious exhibition of his grace by the life and writings of Bradwardine, was preparing, not long after his decease, to revive the light of Divine truth in England, and there to form a people for himself, who should set forth his praise.

CHAP. III.

JOHN WICKLIFF.

I. HIS LIFE.

II. HIS RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS.

III. REFLECTIONS ON HIS CHARACTER.

IV. FURTHER OBSERVATIONS ON THE PANEGYRIC AND CALUMNY WITH WHICH HE HAS BEEN TREATED BY HISTORIANS AND BIOGRAPHERS.

I. THE LIFE OF WICKLIFF.

THE papal advocates ascribe the progress of Wickliff's opinions to several circumstances:—1st, The decrepit age of Edward III. and the infancy of his successor Richard; 2d, The charms of novelty; 3d, The enmity of the duke of Lancaster against the clergy; and, lastly, The wicked and intolerable despotism of the Roman See, manifested by its multiplied exactions, and corrupt collations to ecclesiastical benefices.

The more moderate of the Romanists have not been

backward in acknowledging, in strong terms, the various abuses and usurpations of the papacy. These, in fact, about the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had arisen to their greatest height; and Wickliff without doubt is one of the first, who dared to call in question the foundation of the tyrannical domination of the clergy.

In regard to the success of this Reformer, be it admitted that a variety of secondary causes contributed to the gradual deliverance of the nation; be it admitted that among these, a principal one was the excessive odium under which the hierarchy laboured at that time; yet the pious student of history will not, on these accounts, be less disposed to see the hand of Providence, in bestowing on our forefathers the blessings of Christian light and liberty. Strange indeed would it be to reject the idea of a Divine influence, because at the moment when it was most wanted, at the crisis when men's patience was almost exhausted by the cruel and scandalous practices of their spiritual rulers, it pleased God to raise up a man of sincere love for the truth, of a hardy temper, and of a penetrating judgment, who was both capable and willing to fight the good fight, and powerfully withstand the numerous enormities then prevalent in the Church.

WICKLIFF was born about the year 1324, at a village near Richmond in Yorkshire. He was admitted a student at Queen's college, Oxford, but soon removed to Merton college, which was at that time
Wickliff's birth;
A. D. 1324. esteemed one of the most famous seminaries of learning in Europe. In the long list of men of note and eminence belonging to this college, we observe the names of William Occham, called the Venerable Inceptor; and of Thomas Bradwardine, called the Profound Doctor.

Our renowned Reformer soon became master of all the niceties of the school-divinity. He seems to have reigned without a rival in the public disputations, which were then in high repute. The Aristotelian logic was at its height*; and Wickliff, in opposing error, made use of

* The Scholastic divinity pretended to discuss and settle all questions in theology in a rational and argumentative manner. Like Plato's school, it has had several ages or periods: the ANCIENT, the MIDDLE, and the NEW.

The Ancient, began under Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, or rather under Abelard, and his disciple, Peter Lombard, called the Master of the

the same weapons, which his adversaries employed in maintaining it. Such were his labours on the week-days, proving to the learned the doctrine concerning which he intended to preach; and on the Sundays he addressed the common people on the points which he had proved before. He always descended to particulars: He attacked the vices of the friars, and many of the prevailing abuses in religion. On the question of the real presence in the Eucharist, Wickliff has been considered as remarkably clear. In this matter the reader will be better enabled to judge for himself, when certain authentic documents, tending to elucidate this early Reformer's opinion of the nature of the Sacrament, shall have been submitted to his consideration.

Wickliff's defence of the university of Oxford, against the encroachments of the Mendicant friars, seems to have been one of the first things which brought him into public notice.

This religious order not only pretended to a distinct jurisdiction from that of the university, but took every opportunity of enticing the students into their convents, insomuch that parents feared to send their children to the respective colleges, lest they should be kidnapped by the friars. We are informed that, owing to this cause, the number of students, from having been thirty thousand, was reduced to about six thousand, in the year 1357.

Sentences, on account of his work of Sentences, which appeared in 1172: it preserved its credit nearly one hundred years.

The Middle, may be reckoned to commence early in the thirteenth century, under Albertus Magnus, a learned Dominican, who published twenty-one volumes in folio at Lyons. These contain chiefly long commentaries on Aristotle; and though they treat every thing in a logical way, are of little real use, but to fill large libraries. The famous Thomas Aquinas was the disciple of Albertus, and read lectures on the book of Sentences. During this period, the Peripatetic philosophy was raised to its utmost reputation. The works of Aquinas have gone through several editions, in seventeen volumes folio. The author died in 1274.

The New, or Third, age of School-divinity, begins with Durandus de St. Pourçain, who wrote commentaries on the four books of Sentences, combated the opinions of Thomas Aquinas, and is said to have displayed great wit and genius. Indeed after the time of Aquinas the scholastic disputes grew more and more subtile, and the whole attention of the disputants was employed on the most frivolous questions. They often contended with great heat about mere formalities, and even raised phantoms in their imaginations for the purpose of continuing disputes, and opposition of sentiment. Durandus died Bishop of Meaux in 1333.—School-divinity is now fallen into the lowest contempt.

The zeal and ability of Wickliff manifested itself on this occasion. He composed and published several spirited treatises, W. advanced to the mastership of Baliol Coll. AGAINST ABLE BEGGARY, AGAINST IDLE BEGGARY, and ON THE POVERTY OF CHRIST. The consequence of these laudable exertions was his advancement to the mastership of Baliol college; and four years after, he was chosen warden of Canterbury hall.

From this office he was ejected, with circumstances of great injustice, by Langham, archbishop of Canterbury.

Ejected by Langham from Canterbury Hall, Wickliff appealed to the pope, who for the space of three years artfully suspended his decision. In the mean time Wickliff, regardless of consequences, continued his attacks on the insatiable ambition, tyranny, and avarice of the ruling ecclesiastics, as also on the idleness, debauchery, and hypocrisy of the friars.

A. D. 1367. Then these things were not done in a corner or by halves; nor did there want informers to carry the news to Rome. Accordingly, nobody was sur-

The ejection confirmed by the pope, prised to hear of the confirmation of the ejection of so obnoxious a person as Wickliff. The pope's definitive sentence to that effect arrived at Oxford in 1370, to the great satisfaction of

A. D. 1370. all the monastic orders, whose dignity and interest were intimately connected with the question of Wickliff's right to hold his office.

A judicious and circumstantial writer, whom I have frequently consulted in these memoirs, apprehends that Wickliff was probably heated against both the pope and the monks* by a resentful sense of the ill-treatment he had met with on this occasion; and there is no denying, that in his expressions there is some appearance of the influence of passion. Moreover, it is, no doubt, true, that where men are wholly devoid of divine grace, personal injuries not only sink deep into the mind, but frequently also are apt to predominate uncontrolled throughout all their conduct. But there want not evidences that in Wickliff a better spirit was the ground of his opposition to the fashionable abuses. Charity teaches us to be very slow in ascribing good practice to bad motives: and

* Collier, 582.

in the instance of this Reformer, it should be remembered that he commenced his attack on the papal corruptions and usurpations long before the unjust decision of the Roman See. He is allowed to have been a person of merit, and of a warm temper; and therefore it may not seem improbable, that his being ejected upon an unjust decision, might whet him to an opposition, and induce him to meditate revenge.

However, to speak freely, the removal of Wickliff from his wardenship was attended with so many concomitant circumstances, perfectly agreeable to the feelings of human nature, that I confess I do not perceive much of the Cross in that disappointment. The loss of his dignity and income was abundantly compensated in various ways. The celebrity of his character was increased; and his learning, good sense, and courage, were the more admired, because he had suffered in a righteous cause.

Add to this, the fame of Wickliff became less confined to the university of Oxford. Almost every where he was looked upon as the defender of truth and liberty. The pope and his cardinals feared him, and minutely observed his proceedings; and on the other hand, we find that the first parliament of England held under king Richard II. entertained so high an opinion of his integrity and knowledge, that in a case of the utmost emergency, and on a very nice and delicate question, they applied to him for the sanction of his judgment and authority. The question was, "Whether, for the defence of the kingdom, that treasure which the lord pope demanded on pain of censures, might not be lawfully detained." The affirmative answer of the casuist was undoubtedly foreseen; but still the application of the king and parliament to a man who had been persecuted by the pope and the archbishop of Canterbury, proves beyond contradiction the high estimation in which he was held. It proves also, that though deprived of his wardenship, and surrounded by exasperated friars, and narrowly watched by the rulers of the church, he must have been supported at this time by worldly friends of the greatest weight and consequence. It could not therefore easily happen, that a man in the splendid situation of Wickliff should remain long without

Wickliff presented to the rectory of Lutterworth, A.D. 1374. an ample maintenance. Accordingly, it appears, that in 1374 he was presented by Edward III. to the rectory of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, and afterwards in 1375, was confirmed in the prebend of Auste in the collegiate church of Westbury. The duke of Lancaster is supposed to have been the chief friend of Wickliff, in obtaining for him the royal patronage. Many persons indeed considered the Reformer as in the high road to some dignified preferment; but there is no account of any such offer being made to him; and if there had, I think it probable he would not have refused it.

Wickliff was now become independent. He had a great many admirers, some powerful friends, and a host of bitter enemies. He was profoundly learned; uncommonly eloquent; and, to complete the character, he was inflamed with a zeal for truth, he abhorred hypocrisy, was hostile to every species of vice, and was himself a man of unexceptionable morals. This was precisely the man who, one might predict, would be likely to fall without mercy on proud popes and idle friars.

The following is a short specimen of the manner in which Wickliff sometimes treated the pope. He called him ANTICHRIST, the proud worldly priest of Rome, and the most cursed of clippers and purse-kervers. He averred, that the pope and his collectors drew out of the land poor men's livelihood, to the amount of many thousand marks a year: and added, that though the realm had a huge hill of gold in it, and no other man took thereof except this proud worldly priest's collector, yet in process of time this hill would be levelled.

His attacks on the friars are innumerable. They draw, said he, children from Christ's religion by hypocrisy; they tell them that men of their order shall never go to hell. They praise their own rotten habit more than the worshipful body of our Lord Jesus Christ. They teach lords and ladies, that if they die in Francis's habit, the virtue of it will preserve them from hell. St. Paul laboured with his own hands; and it is the commandment of Christ, to give alms to poor, feeble, crooked, blind, and bed-ridden men; but it is leaving this commandment, to

give alms to such hypocrites as the begging friars, who feign themselves holy and needy, when in fact they are strong in body, and possess overmuch riches, as well as great houses, precious clothes, jewels and other valuable things.

It was not to be expected that the Romish clergy should tamely submit to reiterated flagellations of this kind. They forthwith selected, from Wickliff's public lectures and sermons, nineteen articles of complaint and accusation, and dispatched them to Rome. A. D. 1376.

The pope was so completely alive to the business, that he sent no fewer than five bulls to England on this occasion. Three of them were directed to the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London. In the first, he orders these prelates to apprehend the rector of Lutterworth, and imprison him, provided they found him guilty of the heresy with which he was charged. In the second, he enjoins them, if they cannot find him, to fix up public citations in Oxford and in other places, for his personal appearance before the pope within the space of three months. In the third, he commands them to acquaint the king and his sons with the heresy of Wickliff, and to require their assistance for its effectual extirpation.

A fourth bull was addressed to the king himself, desiring his royal help and patronage in the prosecution of the heretic. And lastly, a fifth was dispatched to the university of Oxford; in which the pope laments the sloth and laziness of the chancellor and heads of the university, in permitting tares to spring up among the pure wheat. Wickliff's doctrines, he said, would subvert both church and state. They ought to forbid the preaching of such tenets, and assist the bishops in their endeavours to bring the offender to punishment.

It is not too much to say, that, both by the university of Oxford, and by the government of the country, these bulls were treated with the utmost contempt. The university for a long time were disposed wholly to reject with disgrace the pontifical injunctions; and when after much deliberation they had received the bull, they refused to be active in giving to it the smallest degree of effect.

The regency and parliament of England manifested

their disapprobation of the persecution of Wickliff, in a manner which must have mortified the haughty pontiff exceedingly. For it was at this moment that they chose to honour this celebrated Reformer with their confidence, as aforementioned in page 247.

The archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London, however, did not hesitate to execute the pope's commands. They cited Wickliff to appear before them at St. Paul's in London, on the thirtieth day after the notice; and this interval of a month was by him wisely employed in taking precautions for his safety. To be brief, he saw no way of evading the present storm of persecution, but by putting himself at once under the protection of the duke of Lancaster, who had long known him, and entertained a high opinion of his learning and integrity, and who was no great admirer either of the monks or of the prelates.

This duke, well known by the name of John of Gaunt, not only advised Wickliff to obey the citation; but also in person, together with Henry Percy, lord marshal of England, accompanied him to St. Paul's. But the conduct of these great personages in the council, I fear, added no real honour to the cause of Wickliff. Sudbury the archbishop was a moderate man, for the times in which he lived; but Courtney, the bishop of London, was an intemperate bigot, no doubt; yet that circumstance will not justify the duke for declaring in court, that "rather than take at his hands what the bishop had said to him, he would drag him by the hair of his head out of the church." The bystanders heard these words, and were so enraged, that they cried aloud "they would rather lose their lives than suffer their bishop to be so contemptuously treated." The court was compelled to break up in tumult and confusion; and it would have given real pleasure to a lover of Christian reformation, if he could have discovered any proof that Wickliff protested against the disorderly and insolent behaviour of his patrons. But this does not appear. Nor is it more than historical justice to say, that the deportment of the archbishop and bishop seems to have been more unexceptionable than that of Wickliff and his friends in this transaction.

Some of the opinions which brought upon Wickliff the indignation of the hierarchy, are allowed by Walsingham, who always strongly supports the cause of popery, to have been,—“that the church of Rome was not the head of other churches,—that St. Peter was not superior to the other Apostles;—and that the pope, in the power of the keys, was only equal to a common priest.” These were undoubtedly the sentiments of genuine protestantism. What he further asserted, namely, that temporal lords and patrons had a right to disseize the church of her emoluments, in case of misbehaviour, was a sentiment expressed in too indefinite a manner to be made matter of serious accusation; but that John of Gaunt should eagerly support it, is what might be expected from the turbulent and violent character of that nobleman.

Wickliff having escaped, in the manner that has been mentioned, those severities which his persecutors, the pope and prelates, had no doubt intended to inflict, paid little regard to the strict charge which they are said to have given him, to be silent in future respecting all the subjects which had given so much offence. He continued in the year 1377, during the minority of Richard the Second, to preach and instruct the people with unabated zeal and courage*.

This perseverance in the good cause induced the English prelates, now encouraged by the decline of the duke of Lancaster's power after the death of king Edward III. to make another attempt at carrying into execution the tyrannical designs of the Roman pontiff.

The heretic was not disobedient to their second citation; for in 1378 we find him before the same papal delegates, assembled on the present occasion, not in St. Paul's, but in the more private archiepiscopal chapel at Lambeth. However, many of the citizens of London, who revered Wickliff, forced themselves, together with a multitude of common people, into the chapel, where they spoke in behalf of the prisoner, and exceedingly terrified his judges. Moreover, the Queen dowager, widow of the Black Prince, ordered Sir L. Clifford to go and peremptorily forbid them to proceed to any

Wickliff
cited again :
A. D. 1378.

* Fox, p. 491.

definitive sentence. Here the papal advocate Walsingham loses all patience. "The bishops," says he, "who had professed themselves determined to do their duty in spite of threats or promises, and even at the hazard of their lives, became so intimidated during the examination of the apostate, that their speeches were as soft as oil, to the public loss of their dignity, and the damage of the whole Church. And when Clifford pompously delivered his message, they were so overcome with fear, that you would have thought them to be as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs. Thus," continues the historian, "this false teacher, this complete hypocrite, evaded the hand of justice ; and could no more be called before the same prelates, because their commission expired by the death of the pope Gregory XI*."

But it must not be here dissembled, that our Reformer, though evidently still protected by the GREAT, did not rest his safety entirely on their authority and interference. He delivered in to the court a solemn protest, and an explanatory qualification of several of his positions which had been deemed erroneous or heretical. His very best friends are ashamed to defend this part of his conduct, and have pronounced his defence to be unnatural, forced, artful, and unmanly. From the few instances which follow, the impartial reader may judge for himself, how far Wickliff in this matter acted with the simplicity and integrity of a servant of Christ.

One of his Conclusions, as they were called, exhibited in the convocation of the bishops held at Lambeth, was this : "All the race of mankind here on earth, except Christ, have no power simply to ordain, that St. Peter and his successors should politically rule over the church for ever." His explanation before the assembly was to this effect : "This Conclusion is self-evident ; inasmuch as it is not in man's power to stop the coming of Christ to judge the quick and the dead."—It seems natural to infer from the Conclusion itself, that Wickliff meant to assert

* Fuller's observation on this event is as follows :—The bishops were struck with a panic fear And the person of this John Wickliff was saved, as was once the doctrine of his GODLY namesake ; "THEY FEARED THE PEOPLE, FOR ALL MEN COUNTED JOHN THAT HE WAS A PROPHET INDEED." Mark xi. 32.

the right of mankind to subvert the political authority of the pope. A bold assertion ! but, at the same time, an inestimable truth, because the papal power was founded in usurpation. But the explanation of the Conclusion renders it equivocal, if not altogether nugatory.

Again. "There is no example of Christ, which giveth power to his disciples to excommunicate any subject, especially for denying clerical claims of temporalities ; but the contrary." This is a part of Wickliff's doctrine, which undoubtedly was levelled at the right of the clergy to possess any kind of property ; and was intended to be applied to the purpose of setting that right aside. He takes care, however, in his explanation, to avoid the direct assertion of his real sentiment, by saying only, "This is declared in that doctrinal principle, taught in Scripture, according to which we believe that God is to be loved above all things ; and our neighbour and enemy are to be loved above all temporal goods : for the law of God cannot be contrary to itself."

Further : "When the pope, or temporal lords, or any other persons, shall have endowed the Church with temporalities, it is lawful for them to take away the same temporalities, as it were, by way of medicine to prevent sin, notwithstanding any excommunication, because they are not given but under a condition."

"The truth of this," says he in his explanation, "is evident ; because nothing ought to hinder a man from performing the principal works of charity. Yet, God forbid, that by these words occasion should be given to the lords temporal to take away the goods of the Church."

I need make no remark on this Conclusion, and its explanation. The next head I shall mention may be reduced to the same class of sentiments ; and seems to show the inconsistency, which I am exposing, in a still more glaring manner.

"If there be a God, the temporal lords may lawfully and meritoriously take away the riches of the Church, when the clergy offend habitually."

Any one, who observes the manner in which Wickliff here speaks of the right of the Church to worldly possessions, and compares it with his other declarations of the

same kind, will not easily perceive on what ground he suffered ecclesiastical property to rest. But if he was sincere in the following explanation of this Conclusion, the terms of it must appear perfectly insignificant *, and he may seem to have expressed in very equivocal and dangerous language, a tenet in itself perfectly harmless. "If," says he, "there be a God, he is omnipotent: if so, he can command the lords temporal thus to act; and if he may thus command, they may lawfully take away such goods. But God forbid, that any should believe my intention to have been, that secular lords may lawfully take away whatsoever goods they please by their own naked authority: only by the authority of the Church they may do so, in cases and in form limited by the laws."

Candour and consistency oblige me to observe, that there appear, especially in this last case, such sophistical methods of argument, and such evasive modes of speech, as are very incompatible with the character of a pious Reformer. In some of the English manuscripts of Wickliff, the pope is called the insolent priest of Rome, Antichristian, Robber, &c.; but nothing of this sort of language is found in his Explanations † of his tenets. I am much inclined to believe the account of L'Enfant in these transactions, because he is an author in general extremely accurate and judicious; and also, because nothing is more natural than for a man, who, in the confidence of great political support, had carried his ideas of external reformation to an unwarrantable length, and had exhibited too much of a military spirit, on finding himself deprived of that support, to sink into a timidity, which might be productive of artifice and dissimulation. In Wickliff's work, called "The great Sentence of Excommunication explained," the following passage appears: "When shall we see the proud priest of Rome grant plenary indulgences to engage men to live in peace and charity, as he does to engage Christians to murder each other?" A severe but just reproof! and abundantly verified in this History of the Church of Christ. But such boldness and severity of censure, ought to be accompanied with the spirit of martyrdom. In this, Wickliff was deficient. If

* Fox, p. 494.

† L'Enfant's Hist. of Constance.

will also appear hereafter, both from the history of the council of Constance, and from some extracts of this Reformer's own writings, that though he expressly condemned all ecclesiastical property whatever, yet he himself enjoyed tithes, and possessed the living of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, to his death*.

From a concise account of the writings and public lectures of Wickliff, with which we purpose to gratify the reader†, it will also distinctly appear in what manner he combated the doctrine of Transubstantiation. At the end of one of his English Confessions of the Sacrament of the Altar, he declared, that one-third of the Clergy were on his side, and would support him at the hazard of their lives. He was, however, condemned by the University, for holding heretical opinions in this matter; and, from the Vice-chancellor's decree‡, Wickliff's Confessions, and other documents, we may form some judgment, though by no means a decisive one, what those opinions really were. Our Reformer has been charged with explaining and qualifying his meaning, in an artful manner, after he had appealed to the secular arm in vain: but here again the reader must determine for himself how far the accusation is well founded. It is certain that his powerful patron, the duke of Lancaster, deserted him on this occasion, and advised him to submit to his natural judges; influenced, it is said, by his dread of the strength of the hierarchy, as well as by scruples of conscience.

In effect, the duke of Lancaster, who had countenanced Wickliff in his opposition to papal usurpation, did not approve his heretical sentiments respecting the received doctrine of the real presence; and he is said to have enjoined silence to this bold innovator on that head. However, soon after this, Wickliff published a long, obscure, and equivocal sort of Confession, which by his enemies has been termed a retractation of his sentiments§.

Whoever carefully examines the original records, will soon be convinced that the merits of this Reformer have

* It is not to be wondered at, that he, who maintained, "that tithes were mere alms," should be accused of supporting the seditious practices of Tyler, Straw, and the other incendiaries in the time of Richard II. There is no clear evidence, however, that Wickliff ever patronised these men. † Page 260, &c. of this Volume. ‡ Pp. 262, &c. *ibid.*

§ Vid. Wickliff's Confession.

been considerably exaggerated. His inconsistencies may indeed be palliated, and in part excused. I am apt to believe also, that in his latter days he thought more moderately, and altered some of his wild and irregular notions concerning property: besides, there are such undoubted proofs of his laborious and indefatigable cares in religion, and of his sound comprehension of the essentials of Christianity, and of his general probity, integrity, and innocence of life, that I should be extremely sorry, if, in any one instance, he may reasonably be suspected of deliberate hypocrisy. That he sought Divine truth, and seriously endeavoured both to teach and to practise it, the general tenor of his life evinces; the testimony also of the best and most upright men who lived nearest his times, is unequivocal in his favour. The great benefit likewise resulting from his labours both in England and Bohemia, seems to show that God honoured him with Evangelical fruitfulness, though it must be owned, that many of his disciples appear on the whole to have been better Christians than himself. That he was really pious, can hardly be doubted; and one point of instruction may in some measure compensate the pain which every lover of truth must feel at the discovery of his inconsistencies. It is this: Let serious divines cease to immerse themselves in political concerns: Politics was the rock on which this great and good man split; and in this case it clearly appeared, that the work of God is not to be carried on by "the arm of flesh."

After the last-mentioned conflict with the university of Oxford, Wickliff appears to have been, in the main, delivered from persecution; and to have been still supported, in some degree, by the secular power and by individuals of distinction, though he was induced, I fear, as the price of that protection, to make such sacrifices as are inconsistent with a direct and open sincerity. He had no trouble from his superiors, at least none that deserves any particular detail, though he certainly continued to the end of his days, in the unremitted exercise of zealous pastoral labours in his parish church of Lutterworth; though he persevered in attacking the abuses of popery by his writings against the mendicants, against transub-

stantiation, and against indulgences; and though he produced a translation of the Bible from the Latin into the English tongue. This work alone sufficed to render his name immortal. The value of it was unspeakable; and his unwearied pains to propagate the genuine doctrines of revelation among mankind, indicated the steady zeal with which he was endowed; while the rage, with which the hierarchy was inflamed against a work so undeniably seasonable, demonstrated, that the ecclesiastical rulers hated the light, and would not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved*.

I know no person of ecclesiastical eminence, whose life and character have cost me more thought and care than Wickliff's. And after all, there is not much to record that deserves the peculiar attention of godly persons. I have consulted the best authorities, and in scrutinizing their contents have been mortified to find, that I could not conscientiously join with the popular cry in ranking this man amongst the highest worthies of the Church. A political spirit, as we have seen, deeply infected his conduct. It nevertheless remains true, that sincere Christians, and more particularly the Protestants of all succeeding ages, are bound thankfully to acknowledge the Divine goodness, for that there actually existed in the personal character of Wickliff "some good thing toward the Lord †;" that such a character was providentially raised up at the very time it was so much wanted; and, that from his labours considerable benefit accrued to the Church of Christ, both in England and upon the Continent ‡.

The Editor of the second and subsequent editions of this Work, takes occasion in this place to express his most entire concurrence in opinion with the Author, respecting the difficulties that have occurred in attempting to give such an account of this Reformer as should accord with the plan of this History. No leading character of real godliness has required one-tenth part of the time, which in this case has been found necessary for the separation of truth from error, and the elucidation of facts which appear involved in great obscurity. The mistakes made

* John iii. ver. 20.

† 1 Kings, xiv. 13.

‡ A Bohemian gentleman, who studied at Oxford, carried Wickliff's books into Bohemia.

by authors of integrity, in dates and in representations of circumstances, are numerous ; and so are the instances of the prejudice and heat of party-writers. They who are well versed in this abstruse species of biography, know perfectly well why it is almost impossible to preserve at all times a complete and orderly connexion between the parts of the materials ; and those who are not so well versed, will be candid enough to take for granted, that though certainly a great deal is recorded about Wickliff, yet it is so discordant and contradictory as to be extremely difficult, if not absolutely incapable of an orderly digestion.

The arrangement adopted by the deceased Author of the History cannot, it should seem, be much mended ; and if the Editor has been able to enrich the narrative, or render it more perspicuous, his success is chiefly to be ascribed to the advantages he has possessed over his worthy relative, in having easy access to numerous very scarce books and manuscripts, which, however, he scruples not to say, he has examined with extraordinary patience.

He is not sure, whether, with a view to gratify some persons who expressed a wish to be better acquainted with this early Reformer, he may not have introduced more circumstances of a secular nature, than the author would have judged suitable for the plan of his History of the Church of Christ.

WICKLIFF died in peace at Lutterworth, of the palsy, in the year 1387. In the year 1410, his works were burned at Oxford ; and in 1428, his remains were dug out of his grave and burned, and his ashes thrown into the river of Lutterworth. The number of his volumes committed to the flames by order of Subinco*, archbishop of Prague, amounted to about two hundred. His labours indeed appear to have been immense ; and beyond all doubt, he was in that dark age a prodigy of knowledge.

After having observed that his works were burned at Oxford, it is proper to add, that previous both to this, and also to the burning of his bones by order of the Council of Constance, a testimonial was publicly given, by the university of Oxford, to his character, dated in the year 1406, which declares †, “That

Wickliff died,
A. D. 1387.

His bones
burnt,
A. D. 1428.

Testimonial from
Oxford, A. D. 1406.

* Fox, p. 509.

† Ib. p. 515.

all his conduct through life was sincere and commendable ; that his conversation from his youth upward, to the time of his death, was so praiseworthy and honest, that never at any time was there a particle of suspicion raised against him ; and that he vanquished by the force of the Scriptures all such as slandered Christ's religion. God forbid that our prelates should condemn such a man as an heretic, who has written better than any others in the university, on logic, philosophy, divinity, morality, and the speculative arts*." This honourable testimony shows that the speculative errors of Wickliff were not attended with practical consequences ; and that sedition in Church and State, was never meant to be encouraged by that Reformer, though the enormities of the age induced him much to exceed the bounds of discretion in his attempts to oppose them.

II.

THE RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS OF WICKLIFF.

THE distinguishing tenet of Wickliff, in religion, was, undoubtedly, the election of grace †. He calls the Church an assembly of predestinated persons. To those who said that God did not every thing for them, but that their own merits contributed in part to salvation, he replied with a short prayer, " Heal us gratis, O Lord !" Those, who have diligently studied the sacred volumes, and also the writings of truly pious Christians, will understand how evangelically humble this Reformer might be in the use of such doctrine, and at the same time, how sincerely laborious in inculcating whatever belongs to genuine piety and virtue, in opposition to the Pharisaic superstitions of the times. And if any one be inclined to doubt this, let him consider that the eleventh article of our own Church says, that we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Saviour, by faith, and not for our own works and deservings ; and yet no sound divine conceives that,

* I find the authenticity of this testimonial has been doubted ; and we are told that no trace of it is to be found among the letters and registers of the university of Oxford.—There is, however, very considerable evidence that it is not spurious. Great liberties, in those violent times, were frequently taken with registers and other documents. For example, the institution of Wickliff to the rectory of Lutterworth, is not to be found in the registers of the bishops of the diocese.—Lewis, 191. Antiq. Ox. 203.

† See Appendix, Wickliff.

for this reason, any man is released from the duty of obeying God's commandments, and of abounding in all the fruits of a pure and evangelical faith*. But let us proceed in our endeavours to collect the doctrines of Wickliff from his writings and other authentic documents.

1. In one of his treatises against the mendicant friars, called "The Complaint of John Wickliff to the King and Parliament," he says †, "If ministers, in the execution of their office, do not act, both by word and example, as God commandeth, their people are not bound to pay them tithes and offerings."

"When the principal cause for which tithes and offerings should be paid does not exist, the payment of tithes should cease. Also clergymen are more to be condemned for withdrawing their teaching in word and in example, than the parishioners are for withdrawing tithes and offerings, even though they discharge their office as they ought."

This last observation presents us with an absurd comparison between two species of transgression; and we need not wonder if the doctrine of the whole passage should have often influenced the conduct of misers and extortioners.

2. In the sixteenth chapter of another treatise against the orders of friars, he directly charges them with perverting the right faith of the sacrament of the altar. "Christ says, that the bread, which he brake and blessed, is his body; and the Scripture says openly, that the sacrament is bread that we break and God's body: but they

* Persons of an Arminian way of thinking, are very apt to consider all Calvinistic doctrine as of an Antinomian tendency; and on the contrary, the Calvinist too frequently reproaches the Arminian for being of a legal spirit, and for denying the free and unmerited salvation of men by Jesus Christ. NEITHER PARTY SHOULD BE PRESSED WITH CONSEQUENCES WHICH THEY THEMSELVES DISAVOW. This very important position is clearly stated, and well defended by Burnet. See Preface to Exposition of xxxix Articles, p. 8. The writer of this History is often called upon to form the best estimate he can of religious characters; and for this purpose, the observance of the rule just mentioned, is of the utmost consequence. It is not his province to enter into the discussion of nice theological or metaphysical questions.

† N. B. Though several of the quotations which follow are marked with inverted commas, for the sake of distinction, they are to be understood as only containing the substance of Wickliff's sentiments, and not his very words.—The originals are frequently in Latin, and often in such antiquated English as would be unintelligible to ordinary readers.

say, 'it is an accident without subject,' and therefore nothing; neither bread, nor God's body. Augustine says, 'what we see, is bread, but to those, who are faithfully taught, the bread is Christ's body.'—Why should our Almighty Saviour conceal this notion of the friars for a thousand years; and never teach the doctrine to his apostles, or to so many saints; but at length communicate it to these hypocrites?"

3. In his public lectures, which he read, as professor of divinity at Oxford, in the summer of 1381*, Wickliff appears to have opposed the papistical doctrine of transubstantiation with all his might; and at the same time to have maintained the true, ancient and scriptural notion of the Lord's Supper. With this view he published sixteen Conclusions, the first of which is expressed in these words: "The consecrated host, which we see upon the altar, is neither Christ nor any part of him, but an effectual sign of him." And he offered to defend this and his other Conclusions in public disputation with any one. But he was prohibited by the rulers of the university and doctors of divinity. Upon which Wickliff published a defence† of his doctrine, which the intelligent reader will think less satisfactory than the above-mentioned Conclusion. "The Eucharist," says he, "is the body of Christ in the form of bread. The right faith of Christian men is this, that this worshipful sacrament is bread and Christ's body, as Jesus Christ is very God and very man."

4. In his Trialog. ‡ he tells us, "that though the bread in the Eucharist begins to be the body of Christ, by virtue of the consecration, it must not be believed that it ceases to be bread. It is plain it is SUBSTANTIALLY bread, because it begins to be SACRAMENTALLY the body of Christ. So Christ says, This is my body. The nature of bread is not thenceforth destroyed, but is exalted into a substance of greater dignity. In a similar way the BAPTIST was made Elias, by virtue of Christ's words in the eleventh of St. Matthew, yet he did not cease to be John. And St. Austin observes, that the Scripture does not say that seven ears of corn and seven fat kine SIGNIFY

* Hist. and Antiq. Oxon. A.D. 1381.

† MS. on a feigned contemplative life.

‡ Lib. IV. cap. 4.

seven years of plenty, but that they ARE those years. Such expressions denote that the subject is ordained of God to FIGURE the thing predicated according to its fitness. And in the same sense and manner the sacramental bread is specially the body of Christ.”—Wickliff very modestly concludes this explanation, with declaring, “that he was ready to believe a more subtle sense, if he could be convinced of the truth of it by Scripture or reason.”

We have observed above, that Wickliff, in the matter of transubstantiation, appears both to have opposed the papistical doctrine, and also to have maintained the true. But the discerning reader cannot fail to remark, that authentic documents leave the former proposition in much less doubt than they do the latter. A want of consistency, at least on this head, is but too evident in the conduct of our Reformer.

The circumstances, which attended his condemnation by the university of Oxford, mentioned in page 255, were these: The vice-chancellor, after reciting, before several doctors in divinity, the Reformer's Conclusions, namely, That in the sacrament the substance of the material bread and wine remain the same after the consecration; and, secondly, That in the venerable sacrament the body and blood of Christ are not present essentially, but only figuratively; with their consent decreed, that “These are execrable errors, and repugnant to the determinations of the Church*.”

From this decree Wickliff appealed to the king†. But as his great friend and powerful supporter, the duke of Lancaster, failed him at this crisis, the attentive reader will be disposed to watch the proceedings of the Reformer at so trying a moment. In particular, he will carefully weigh the terms used in that confession or retractation, which has been noticed in page 255. There Wickliff declares his belief, as follows: “The same body of Christ which was incarnate of the Virgin, which suffered on the cross, which lay three days in the grave, and rose again on the third day, this same body and same substance is verily and really the sacramental bread or consecrated host,

* Spelman, Vol. II. † Walsingh. Hist. Angliæ. and Antiq. Oxon.

which we see in the hands of the priest." But he presently adds*, "That he dare not say that the body of Christ, considered as an EXTENDED BODY, is essentially and substantially the bread: There is a threefold manner of the body of Christ being in the consecrated host, viz. a virtual, spiritual, and sacramental." And so in his Trialogus he says, "This sacrament is the body of Christ; and not only that which shall be, or which figures sacramentally the body of Christ." And again, "That the host is to be adored principally for this reason, not because it is in some respect the body of Christ, but because it contains in a secret manner the body of Christ within itself." He is very constant in asserting†, "That the bread, by the words of consecration, is not made the Lord's glorified body, or his spiritual body, which is risen from the dead, nor his fleshly body as it was before he suffered death; but that the bread still continues bread; and so there is bread and the body of Christ together."

Some of Wickliff's admirers, who can see no defects in their favourite, would explain the contradictions and obscurities, which are to be found in his various writings and confessions on the subject of Transubstantiation, by affirming, that he discovered the truth gradually, and that he was late in fixing his opinions on the Lord's Supper. And if this could be made out, it would, doubtless, be a very natural and a very satisfactory defence of the Reformer; but let us attend to the sentiments of a very great man, whose extensive learning and extraordinary candour were never called in question. "I have looked‡," says Melancthon, "into Wickliff, who is very confused in this controversy of the Lord's Supper; but I have found in him, also, many other errors, by which a judgment may be made of his spirit. He neither understood nor believed the righteousness of faith. He foolishly confounds the Gospel and politics; and does not see that the Gospel allows us to make use of the lawful forms of government of all nations. He contends, that it is not lawful for priests to have any property. He wrangles sophistically, and downright seditiously, about civil dominion. In the same

* Wickliff's Confession. † See Wickliff's Wicket. and Trialog Lib. IV.

‡ Sententiæ veterum de cæna Domini.

manner he cavils sophistically against the received opinion of the Lord's Supper."

The most important Latin performance of Wickliff, seems to be his *Trialogus*; from which several passages have already been quoted, for the purpose of elucidating the author's sentiments on the doctrine of Transubstantiation.

This brilliant work was answered by WIDEFORT, a Franciscan, who dedicated his laboured Reply, to archbishop Arundel. L'Enfant tells us, in his History of the Council of Constance, that he found a copy of the *Trialogus* in the university of Frankfort on the Oder. It contains a dialogue between three speakers, whom the author calls Truth, Falsehood and Wisdom. With what vehemence he opposed the fashionable abuses, may be collected from a single sentence respecting the crime of simony. "Those stupid Simonists imagine that Grace may be bought and sold like an ox or an ass." And speaking of the invocation of saints, he observes, "The festival of the day is to no purpose, if it do not tend to magnify Jesus Christ, and induce men to love HIM. Moreover, our Redeemer Jesus Christ is very God, as well as very man, and therefore, on account of his divinity, he must infinitely exceed any other man. And this consideration induces many to think that it would be expedient to worship no other Being among men, except Jesus Christ; inasmuch as he is the best mediator and best intercessor; and they likewise think, that when this was the practice of the Church, it increased and prospered much better than it does now. What folly then to apply to any other person to be our intercessor! What folly, to choose of two persons proposed, the least eligible of the two, to be our intercessor! Would any one choose the king's buffoon to be an intercessor? The saints in heaven are not indeed buffoons; but in dignity they are less, compared with Jesus Christ, than a buffoon is, when compared with an earthly king."

He is very pointed in asserting the authority of Scripture, which he maintains, infinitely surpasses the authority of any other writings whatsoever; and he declares, that to hold the contrary, is the most damnable of all heresies.

He assures us, that he so strenuously combated, in the university and before the people, the errors on the sacrament, because none had proved more destructive to mankind. "These errors," says he, "fleece men, and draw them into idolatry: They then deny the faith of the Scriptures; and by their infidelity provoke the God of truth." Such were the principles of Wickliff, and such the testimonies which he has left against the corruptions of the church of Rome.

5. There is preserved in the library of the Cathedral of York, an Apology for Wickliff, written by Dr. Thomas James, keeper of the public library at Oxford, for the purpose of showing this great Reformer's conformity with the present Church of England. The contents of the Apology are collected chiefly from Wickliff's own manuscripts.—I shall present the reader with a few quotations.

Speaking of the Scriptures, Wickliff says, "I think it absurd to be warm in defence of the apocryphal books, when we have so many which are undeniably authentic. In order to distinguish canonical books from such as are apocryphal, use the following rules: 1. Look into the New Testament, and see what books of the Old Testament are therein cited and authenticated by the Holy Ghost. 2. Consider whether the like doctrine be delivered by the Holy Ghost elsewhere in the Scripture." These observations to us, no doubt, appear extremely obvious, and no more than plain, common sense: but those, who are aware of the dominion of prejudice in the age of Wickliff, and of the implicit obedience then shown to ecclesiastical authority, will be best qualified to appreciate that vigour of understanding, and that resolute integrity, which could produce such sentiments, and a correspondent practical conduct.

Dr. James, the compiler, tells us that Wickliff was earnest, every where in his writings, to establish the grand protestant sentiment, of the sufficiency of the Scriptures for saving instruction; and that the reason of his earnestness and pious zeal was, in substance, this: "Few sermons were preached in his time; and those few were on fabulous subjects and traditions, and profaned with much scurrility and emptiness. Friars persecuted the

faithful, and said, it had never been well with the Church since lords and ladies regarded the Gospel, and relinquished the manners of their ancestors."

"Some," says he, "are enlightened from above, that they may explain the proper, literal, and historical sense of Scripture, in which sense, all things necessary in Scripture are contained."

This remark was doubtless made to guard his readers against the devious paths of fantastic and endless allegories, in which the sportive genius of Origen had been so conversant; and which, for ages, had thrown so great a cloud over the genuine meaning of the Sacred Writers. It was, at the same time, a strong indication of the native vigour of that good sense, with which the pastor of Lutterworth was eminently endowed; and his idea of Divine assistance, as necessary to qualify a man for the explanation of the revealed Word, indicates his knowledge of our natural blindness and depravity: and further, in making this last observation, he doubtless intimates the very great advantage, which, as a religious instructor, a person, who is practically led by the Spirit of God, has over a mere self-sufficient theorist, depending on the use of his own understanding. We have, indeed, from the extreme disadvantages of obscurity, in which this author's works appear, little opportunity of estimating his merits as a theologian; but it is sufficiently evident, from a few fragments* of his voluminous writings, that, in light and talents, he was greatly superior to his contemporaries; and if he had escaped the snare of that political specu-

* Subinco, archbishop of Prague, about the year 1409, endeavoured to collect all the writings of Wickliff, which had been introduced into Bohemia. He is said to have gotten into his possession 200 of them, all of which he burnt by virtue of a royal edict.—Camerarius *Historica Narratio*, p. 32.—The books were very finely written, and adorned with costly covers and golden bosses, which makes it probable that they belonged to the Bohemian nobility and gentry. The account which Æneas Sylvius gives of this transaction is as follows:

"Subinco, cognomine Lepus, claris parentibus apud Bohemos natus, per idem tempus Pragensem ecclesiam pontificio retinebat consilio et animo illustris. Qui orienti calamitati obviam ire cupiens, priusquam amplius debaccharetur, libros Johannis Wiclefi ad se ferri, omnesque, doctorum virorum consilio adhibito, publice concremari jussit. Supra ducenta volumina fuisse traduntur, pulcherrimè conscripta, bullis aureis, tegumentisque pretiosis ornata. Johanni prædicatio interdicta; et adjectæ moriæ, si quando priores in populo errores vulgare auderet."—*Fascie*. Vol. I. 297.

lation, which encourages sedition, and makes Christ's kingdom to be of this world, he might have stood among the foremost of those geniuses, who, since the apostolic age, have been raised up by Providence to instruct and reform the human race.

“Sanctity of life,” he observes, “promotes this ILLUMINATION so necessary for understanding the revealed Word; to continue which in the Church is the duty of theologians, who ought to remain within their proper limits, and not to invent things foreign to the faith of Scripture.”

He lays down some good rules for an expositor, “1. He should be able by collation of manuscripts to settle well the sacred text. 2. He should be conversant in logic. 3. He should be constantly engaged in comparing one part of Scripture with another. 4. The student should be a man of prayer, and his disposition should be upright. 5. He needs the internal instruction of the Primary Teacher.” This last is Augustine's favourite idea; namely, that a genuine relish for Divine aid in rightly interpreting and applying Scripture, is the sure index of an humble spirit; and that the contempt of it no less powerfully indicates the prevalence of profaneness or self-conceit.

The Council of Constance condemned this great man, for denying the pope's supremacy. We shall afterwards see, that that council is entitled to little regard. What colour they might have for their censure, seems to be grounded on his avowed opinion, that all the bishops of Rome before his time, for three hundred years, had been heretics: and yet he advances, that, “whoever disobeys the papal mandates, incurs the charge of Paganism*.” By comparing these two passages together, it seems that he was willing to own the supremacy of that see, provided it was filled by a faithful pastor.

Further, in Dr. James's collection, there are also extracts and observations, in substance as follows:

“The merit of Christ is of itself sufficient to redeem every man from hell. Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is sufficient for salvation; and without faith it is impossible to please God.”

* Apology, Chap. on the Pope, Sect. 1.

And the writer informs us, that, on the leading controversy respecting Justification, Wickliff accorded fully with the Church of England; and that he persuaded men “to trust wholly to Christ, to rely altogether upon his sufferings, and not to seek to be justified in any other way than by his justice:” that he said, “Unbelievers, though they might perform works apparently good in their matter, still were not to be accounted righteous men; that all who followed Christ, became righteous through the participation of his righteousness, and would be saved.” He adds the following sentences: “Human nature is wholly at enmity with God: All men are originally sinners, not only from their mothers’ wombs, but in their mothers’ wombs: We cannot think a good thought unless Jesus send it: We cannot perform a good work unless it be properly his good work: His mercy prevents us, so that we receive grace; and it follows us so as to help us and keep us in grace. Heal us, good Lord, we have no merit! Give us grace to know that all thy gifts be of thy goodness only*.”

I recommend these hints to the particular notice of such serious readers as set a high value on the essential truths of the Gospel. They will draw their own conclusions from them. In regard to myself, I have been much mortified to find so little recorded from Wickliff’s writings respecting these truths, even by his most diligent biographers. Two of these, very great admirers of this Reformer, either did not comprehend the great doctrines of Justification by faith, and of the nature of good works, or, they must have thought them of little consequence. On all other points they dwell with sufficient accuracy, and with a minuteness of detail; whereas if they touch on these at all, it is done with the greatest reserve; and the little they say is far from being clear. Yet both of the authors to whom I allude, show that they were well aware of the above-mentioned censure of Wickliff by Melancthon†; for one of them has given a very unsatisfactory answer to the charge; and the other appears to me to have evaded the question, and to have presented

* De Veritate Script. in Expos. Decal. Comment. in Psalm.

† Page 263 of this Vol.

his reader with a very imperfect view of Wickliff's sentiments on a most important point. He barely says, "Wickliff asserted the necessity of Divine grace. Without this, he saw not how a human being could make himself acceptable to God." Every admirer of Wickliff, if he also be a sincere approver of the inestimable protestant doctrines concerning the grace of God and of the justification of man, will be gratified in reading the sentiments I have produced from Dr. James's collection. If such sentiments abound not in Wickliff's writings, so much as sound and enlightened Christians might wish, it becomes the more necessary to take notice of those which we do find there. At least the plan of this History, which professes to search every where for the real Church of Christ, rendered these remarks indispensably necessary.

The Apology by Dr. James contains many other memorable sentiments of this Reformer: Among which is this, —

"We worship not the image, but the Being represented by the image, say the patrons of idolatry in our times. Suffice it to say, idolatrous heathens said the same."

He also vehemently opposed the whole doctrine of Indulgences; and expressed in the most decisive manner, his disapprobation of forced vows of celibacy, either in the case of monks or of the secular clergy. He is accused of having been an enemy to all oaths, but the Apology proves directly the contrary: also a passage in his book against the mendicant friars, seems to invalidate the charge; "God," says he, "teaches us to swear by himself, when necessity calls for it, and not by his creatures."

In his treatise on the Truth of the Scriptures, Wickliff PROTESTS, that in his love and veneration for the Church of Rome, (which he calls his mother) it was his study and endeavour to defend all her privileges. He adds, however, that her privileges came from God, and would be the more ample, in proportion as she conformed herself closer to Christ and his laws. No man ought to think that the faith of the Church, or of any individual member of the Church, depended upon this Peter, that John, or that Gregory. It might happen that our lord pope may be ignorant of the laws of the Scripture; and that the Church of England may understand the Catholic truth far

better than the whole aggregate of the Roman Church with the pope and cardinals altogether*.

Dr. James endeavours to reconcile the former part of this paragraph with the latter. But I think it as well to leave this matter to the reader's judgment.

It has been said that Wickliff preached against purgatory†; but I can find no clear proof that his judgment was ever decided against that abomination of popery. Dr. James allows that he speaks of the dreadful pains of purgatory, and also of praying for the dead. It appears also that he himself prayed to the Virgin Mary. In one place, however, he certainly uses language which may be thought extraordinary in the writings of a man, who seriously believed the popish doctrine of a middle state of temporary punishment. His words are, "Omnia dicta de purgatorio dicuntur solummodo comminatoriè tanquam pia mendacia‡." That is, All things that are said concerning purgatory, are said only in the way of threatening; and are to be considered as pious falsehood.

He maintained, that the papistical practice of extreme unction was no sacrament, and that if it had been so, Christ and his Apostles would not have been silent on such a matter. He blames covetous and greedy priests for making this a source of profit.

Holy orders, however, he considered as one of the SEVEN sacraments of the Church. There were but, he said, *two* species of orders, namely, that of deacons, and of priests. The church militant ought not to be burdened with *three*; nor was there any ground for it§. He inveighs severely against the "foul extortion" of fees which took place upon the admission into holy orders; he declares, that a man might have a common barber to attend him a whole year for what he paid to have his crown once shaven.

Selection of Wickliff's Articles, viz. 287. It may deserve notice, that the two last positions, concerning extreme unction, and holy orders, are among the 287 Articles which were selected from Wickliff's writings, and condemned at Oxford in the year 1411||. I find also the same two Articles

* Dr. James's Apol. C. IV. 1.

† De Verit. Script.

|| Antiq. Oxon. 205.

† Fuller, p. 130.

§ Dr. James's Apol. C. VIII. 2 & 4.

among the 301 Conclusions, condemned at the Council of Constance*.

It has been thought, I am well aware, that the Reformers of the sixteenth century built on the foundation which Wickliff had laid. But his knowledge of Christian doctrine, though fundamentally sound, was yet so defective, so obscure, and so scholastical, while that of those admirable Reformers carries such internal marks of originality, of accurate method, and of solid scriptural investigation, that they do not appear to have followed him at all as a guide in theology. We have seen that Melancthon, one of the most judicious and candid of them, thought that Wickliff understood not the doctrine of the righteousness of Faith. It might, perhaps, be nearer the truth to say, that in an accurate knowledge of that important article he seems to have been defective. At the same time, however, that his light respecting pure Evangelical doctrine was scanty, his views of external reformation erred in the extreme of excess. He disliked ALL church endowments, and wished to have the clergy reduced to a state of poverty. He insists that parishioners had a right to withhold tithes from pastors who were guilty of fornication. Now if, in such cases, he would have allowed every individual to judge for himself, who does not see what a door might be opened to confusion, fraud, and the encouragement of avarice?

In vitium ducit culpæ fuga, si caret arte. HOR.

Never was this remark of the poet more completely exemplified than in the conduct of Wickliff. An honest indignation on account of the enormities and immense revenues of the clergy in his day, led this extraordinary genius to use rash and indefensible expressions, which his own practice, in regard to his benefice at Lutterworth, seemed to contradict: Hence I am led to conclude, that this good man intended not absolutely, on this subject, the whole of what he uttered in his warmth. Hath the Lord ordained, that they who “preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel †?” And have pastors, after all, no right to be maintained by the people? Doubtless, they have not, if it be true, that all which they receive, is properly to be called alms. Or, ought they, whose business it is to instruct their flocks in their most important and

* Fascic. rer. I. 269.

† 1 Cor. ix. 14.

eternal concerns, to be placed in situations not really differing from those of beggars? In such a view, the whole body of the clergy might justly be denominated MENDICANTS, the very orders of men, against which Wickliff so copiously inveighed. This whole sentiment, of reducing the tithes and offerings conferred on the clergy to alms, however it may flatter the pride and avarice, and profaneness of many of the laity in our days, appears on every account perfectly indefensible. The very nature of alms supposes, that the objects of them are recommended to our regard, not by the services which they perform, but by the distresses which they endure. Is this the proper light in which we should view the character of a Christian pastor? or, can this be called, in any degree, a just representation of the functions of a teacher of the Gospel? And, lastly, are spiritual services of so little estimation, as to claim no reward from those on whom they are conferred?

This great defect in Wickliff's ideas of church reformation, very much lessened his reputation in the eyes of those reformers who followed him. Melancthon, in particular, a zealous friend of order and decorum, represents him, as we have already seen, to have been, in this respect, destitute of all sobriety of judgment. It is not to be denied, however, that he was a light in his day. There is reason to believe, that many, who were by no means disposed to defend his errors, admired his virtues; and even those who would describe his lantern as dimly scattering only a few obscure rays of Evangelical truth, must still confess that it sufficed to discover to mankind the turpitude of the works of darkness, which predominated in England. The inestimable present of the Word of God in their own language, with which he was enabled to favour his countrymen, conveyed instruction to great numbers: there was an effusion of the Divine Spirit: and in the next chapter we must attend to its effects.

III.

REFLECTIONS ON THE CHARACTER OF WICKLIFF.

THE reader is now to judge, whether from the historical facts which have been laid before him, together with the extracts from the writings of Wickliff, the writer of

this ecclesiastical history be well founded in the observations which he has made on the character and opinions of this celebrated Reformer. And, though it is much to be regretted, that, in regard to certain parts of his conduct, neither the purity of his motives, nor the clearness of his knowledge, can be so ascertained as entirely to stifle suspicion, or silence objection, yet is our information sufficient to explain several things which appear inconsistent or contradictory, as recorded by memorialists and biographers.

For example: 1. We may allow and lament, that in certain difficult and dangerous moments of his life, there existed in the defences and explanations of Wickliff, more equivocation and artifice than are consistent with the simplicity of character which should mark a true disciple and follower of Jesus Christ: but when this defect is admitted, who can deny, that, on the whole, he was a sincere believer of Christianity, and a zealous advocate for its essential doctrines? Mr. Hume had too much good sense, and was too acute an observer, not to discover in Wickliff this firm belief of the Christian religion, and this fervent love of the great truths which it teaches: but in order to appreciate justly HIS remarks on any religious character of this kind, we ought to keep in view the well known prejudices of this otherwise incomparable historian. His dislike of the Gospel of Christ is so perfect and complete, that wherever he finds sincerity in believing, and zeal in supporting and propagating its fundamentals, these dispositions sink all such persons in his esteem; and, in most cases, when the question turns entirely upon religion, we expect in vain from him, not only the candour and moderation of a philosophical critic, but the justice and impartiality of an upright judge. Mr. Hume's account of Wickliff is as follows*: "He denied the doctrine of the real presence, the supremacy of the Church of Rome, the merit of monastic vows. He maintained, that the Scripture was the sole rule of faith; that the Church was dependent on the State, and should be reformed by it; that the clergy ought to possess no estates; that the begging friars were a general nuisance, and ought not to be supported; that the numerous cere-

* Hume, Rich. II. chap. 17.

monies of the Church were hurtful to true piety. He asserted, that oaths were unlawful, that dominion was founded in grace, that every thing was subject to fate and destiny, and that all men were pre-ordained either to eternal salvation or reprobation." The same historian also owns, that the doctrines of Wickliff were derived from his search into the Scriptures and into ecclesiastical antiquity; and he tells us that they were nearly the same with those, which were propagated by the Reformers in the sixteenth century. After such a detail, who would expect the author to conclude with this remarkable sentence? "From the WHOLE of his doctrine, Wickliff appears to have been strongly tinged with ENTHUSIASM, and to have been thereby better qualified to oppose a Church, whose chief characteristic is SUPERSTITION." Therefore, according to Mr. Hume's judgment, it was not so much the rational argumentation of Wickliff, or his diligent search into the Scriptures, as his enthusiasm, which qualified him to become a formidable adversary of the papal superstitions and corruptions. If Wickliff had opposed the abominations of the Church of Rome by ridicule and banter, by scorn and contempt, by sceptical objections to revelation in general, and by these methods only, he would probably have escaped this censure.

"He was distinguished," Mr. Hume says, "by a great austerity of life and manners;" and the historian then coolly observes, that this is "a circumstance common to almost all those, who DOGMATIZE IN ANY NEW WAY." Infidel philosophers and infidel historians, never comprehend how the honour of God, and the salvation of men, can be the ruling principles of a rational conduct. The profession of such principles appears to them to be connected with hypocrisy or enthusiasm: And, therefore, in estimating the merits of truly religious characters, they make no candid allowance for the weakness and imperfection of human nature; but are most ingenious and acute in discovering faults and inconsistencies, as well as bitter and sarcastic in exposing them. If, on the one hand, I have been mortified in finding myself constrained to differ from many in their unbounded applause of Dr. Wickliff, I have felt it a duty, on the other, to correct

the uncandid and injurious representations of a profane historian, who would insinuate to the minds of the unwary, that this Reformer, "though a man of parts and learning," was in fact a cautious or cowardly enthusiast. The defects or inconsistencies, with which, in the former part of this account, I acknowledge the memory of this great man to be considerably stained, afford some handle for the suspicion of timidity or cowardice; but, for the charge of enthusiasm, the historian has no warrant whatever. Moreover, supposing it true, that Wickliff's timid disposition, or any other cause, induced him to decline the praise of martyrdom—is it not at least equally true, that he involved himself in much danger and difficulty, by bringing forward his opinions; that he showed much courage and ability in supporting them; and that, rather than retract them, he suffered heavy persecutions with great patience and fortitude? Did the philosophic Mr. Hume infer the nature of a man's disposition from an occasional imbecility manifested in some trying moments, rather than from the uniform tenor of his conduct? Or did he esteem every man a coward or a hypocrite, who, in explaining his religious sentiments, may, in some instances, have softened them, or perhaps, equivocated for the purpose of saving his life*?

I consider this as ONE very clear and decisive instance of Mr. Hume's prejudice and partiality. There are many others, in his very excellent writings, of a similar kind. He has a very sly and artful way of insinuating his own opinions, and of depreciating truly religious men; and it is not a sufficient guard against this practice, merely to advertise the young student that this is actually the case, and that therefore he must be constantly on the watch. Clear instances, like this respecting Wickliff, should be produced. It would be very easy to collect a number of a similar sort; and such a collection of particular and distinct examples would be infinitely more efficacious in preventing the daily mischief done by this author's rash assertions, and dangerous insinuations, than numerous pages of GENERAL disapprobation or abuse with which many well-intentioned publications continually abound.

* Hume, Rich. II. chap. 17.

Such general disapprobation or abuse of an author, whose excellencies the student is in the habit of seeing and admiring, is apt to disgust by frequent repetition, rather than to be productive of caution. Show the student that his favourite historian or philosopher is under the dominion of the most violent prejudices, and that he is capable of misrepresenting notorious facts ; do this, even in one instance only, and the memory of it will sink deep into his mind, and prove salutary in its consequences.

2. But other causes, besides a spirit of opposition to revealed religion, have contributed not a little to render some circumstances in our histories of Wickliff contradictory and inconsistent. Let a few hints suffice.

This nation had so long groaned under the evils of popery, that for many years after the Reformation, it was the custom with ecclesiastical writers of the protestant class, to be continually venting their indignation against papal tyranny and superstition. And though it is very true, that the abominations of the Roman Church form so shocking a narrative, that our aversion to that antichristian hierarchy can hardly be raised to too high a pitch ; nevertheless, the integrity of history may easily have suffered in particular instances through this aversion, however laudable and well-founded the disposition in itself may have been. Further : an ardent love of freedom, and an unconquerable hatred of slavish doctrines, both in civil and ecclesiastical institutions, are well known to constitute in general, a striking feature of the British character. Now with these two considerations in view, let it be remembered also, that Wickliff has unquestionably the honour of being the first person in Europe that publicly called in question, by his discourses, sermons, and writings, those principles, which had universally passed for certain and undisputed during many ages, and then, I think, we must cease to wonder, that this Reformer's conduct and opinions should have been often exhibited to us in the most glowing terms of veneration and respect ; which terms, however, may be expected to vary materially, according as the sentiments of the historian or biographer have more or less of an aristocratic or a popular tendency ; and again, according as the writer's views of ecclesiastical government

are confined to merely political considerations, or as they extend to the eternal interests of mankind. No apology can be necessary for having freely animadverted upon such a writer as Mr. Hume; but it might be invidious to exemplify the distinctions here alluded to by apposite quotations from authors, whose zeal for liberty, or whose predilection for particular sentiments, appear to me to have carried them unwarrantable lengths in the commendation of Wickliff. The student of ecclesiastical history will, however, do well to recollect, that unless he keep these and similar distinctions in his mind, and carefully allow for them, he will be much bewildered in his researches. The bigoted papist usually loses his patience in describing the principles and conduct of Wickliff: the unbeliever, in treating the same subject, sees no difficulties, but what are easily explained on the supposition of enthusiasm, hypocrisy, pride of the human heart, or love of popularity. Moderate divines, even of the Roman-catholic persuasion, support Wickliff to a certain point, particularly in his attack on the abuses which interfered with their own interests and privileges: Protestant divines may be expected to defend the Reformer much further: And, in fact, those Protestants, who are usually denominated low churchmen, have shown themselves disposed to transmit his memory to posterity with the most exalted encomiums. His manly freedom in inquiring after truth, and his great boldness in defending it and in encountering dangers, please them so much, that they become almost blind to the faults, errors, and defects of their favourite ecclesiastic. Lastly, it deserves also to be remembered, that those, who are most godly and practical in their conversation, and whose lives are most devoted to promote the salvation of the souls of men, who are the least worldly minded, and meddle the least with political discussions, and controversies, such persons, with regret, are compelled to withhold an unlimited approbation of Wickliff. They gratefully praise God for having raised up a champion for the faith of the Gospel in the most perilous times, and when very much needed:—they rejoice in finding evidence that this celebrated champion did belong to the true Church of Christ: they charitably hope and believe that he said

and did many things, which, had they been recorded, might perhaps have made it still clearer that he belonged to the most distinguished part of Christ's little flock ; and lastly, they sincerely lament, that so honoured a servant of God should seem, on any occasion in supporting the righteous cause of religion, to have relied on political dexterity, or on the favour of a court, or to have afforded a handle for the suspicion of artifice and duplicity.

IV.

FURTHER OBSERVATIONS ON THE PANEGYRIC AND CALUMNY WITH WHICH WICKLIFF HAS BEEN TREATED BY HISTORIANS AND BIOGRAPHERS.

1. THE mendicant friars, who settled in Oxford about the year 1230, proved very troublesome and offensive to the university. Their insolent behaviour produced endless quarrels, and their conduct in general was so exceptionable, that, so far from being objects of charity, they became a reproach to all religion. Wickliff lashed this set of men with great acrimony and acuteness ; and, by exposing their shameful corruptions and hypocritical pretences, made known his learning and talents ; and established his own reputation and consequence. He became at once the beloved and the admired champion of the university. On the contrary, the mendicants “ were set on a rage and madness ; and even as hornets with their sharp stings they assailed this good man on every side, fighting for their altars, paunches and bellies*.” But the daring, active spirit of Wickliff was not to be overcome by the opposition of such men. Fortunately for him, they were in the highest discredit at Oxford ; whereas our Reformer was looked up to almost as an oracle ; for he had not, as yet, proceeded to those lengths of innovation, which afterwards called forth the vengeance of the hierarchy, and involved him in various difficulties and persecutions. His friends procured him a benefice ; he took his degree of doctor of divinity ; he was elected into the professor's chair ; and he read lectures publicly with the greatest applause†.

* Fox's Acts and Monuments.

† Leland de Script. Brit.

2. The credit and interest of Wickliff were much strengthened by the active part which he took in supporting the independence of the crown, against the pope's pretensions and menaces. Pope Urban claimed a tribute from King Edward III. The clergy in general espoused the cause of his holiness ; but Wickliff distinguished himself, by publishing a masterly answer to the most plausible arguments, which could be produced in support of so unjust a demand. This step irritated his brethren, the clergy, with the pope at their head ; the professor of divinity, however, had the Parliament, as well as every disinterested subject of the realm on his side in this question. From the same cause he seems to have been first made known at court, and particularly to the duke of Lancaster. His great learning, increasing celebrity, and powerful connexions, all contributed to support his courage, and to give vigour to the resolutions which he had secretly made for reforming the prevailing corruptions. Accordingly, he proceeded to open the eyes of the people with still greater boldness and plainness of speech. He demonstrated the Romish religion to be a system of errors : he attacked the scandalous lives of the monastic clergy ; and showed how they invented and multiplied such superstitious opinions and doctrines, as suited their worldly, sensual, and avaricious views.

3. These extraordinary steps both alarmed the hierarchy and excited its resentment. The clergy raised violent clamours against the heretic : the archbishop of Canterbury took the lead ; and the professor was silenced and deprived. In this very moment of his disgrace, we find Dr. Wickliff was brought to court, treated with peculiar kindness, and appointed one of the king's ambassadors*, for the purpose of treating with the pope, concerning a variety of intolerable hardships and usurpations under which the nation had long groaned. On his return, he appears to have recovered his station in Oxford, and to have inveighed against the Church of Rome, in harsher language than he had ever done before, both in his public lectures and in private. His negotiations abroad with the pope's nuncios had, probably, afforded him opportunities

* Rymer's *Fœdera* ; A. D. 1374

of seeing more striking proofs of the ambition, covetousness, tyranny, and insolence of the papal domination. In this part of the HISTORY of our Reformer, there is considerable defect and obscurity. We find, however, that, notwithstanding his employments in the university, he did not neglect to cultivate his great connexions. He was often at court, and continued in high credit with the duke of Lancaster; and though, by many of the clergy, he was esteemed an enemy to the Church and a false brother, he obtained the valuable rectory of Lutterworth, through the Royal favour. These facts deserve particular notice; as they determine several points beyond all controversy: namely, the great weight of Wickliff's character and reputation; his disposition to political concerns and to public business; and, lastly, the sources of that esteem and applause on the one hand, and, on the other, of that hatred and calumny which he met with so plentifully in the former part of his life.

4. While the Reformer confined himself to attacks on the luxury and indolence of the mendicant friars, he was the favourite of the university of Oxford: while he only opposed the exorbitant claims of the papacy upon the king and his subjects, he was admired and applauded by the English court and parliament. His conduct, however, in both these instances, marked him at the court of Rome as an object of detestation and vengeance; and we need not wonder, if the ecclesiastical dignitaries in England, and the regular clergy in general, sympathized with the pope in sentiment and feeling. In effect the dignitaries complained to the pope; and the pope in great wrath sent bull after bull to the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London, directing them to take immediate cognizance of Wickliff's heresies, and to imprison him. Hence the citations, of which, and of their consequences, we have already given a concise account*. And it deserves to be remembered how in those affairs the pope and his delegates had the art to select such articles of accusation against the innovator, as might prove a severe trial of his fortitude and sincerity, and also be most likely to involve him in much difficulty and equivocation; and yet

* Pp. 249-252 of this Vol.

at the same time bring the least odium upon themselves as accusers. But as soon as Wickliff began to assail the Roman-catholic religion in a closer manner, and to level his batteries at its very foundations; when he was no longer content with exposing the infamous lives and practices of the monastic orders, or with declaiming against the avaricious encroachments and contemptible superstitions of the papal system; when he proceeded to show how the pure doctrines of the Gospel, and the true spirit of Christianity, were almost lost amidst the innumerable abominations of popery; when he descended to particulars, attacked the reigning doctrines of transubstantiation, of worshipping images and deceased saints, and, above all, of merits and satisfactions, and restored in their place the sound Evangelical doctrines of the meritorious sacrifice of our Saviour, and of Justification by faith, we then find not only the whole hierarchy in a flame, but even the vice-chancellor and governing part of the university of Oxford, joining in the general outcry against their professor of divinity. Hence the vice-chancellor's peremptory decree, at Oxford*, against Wickliff's notions of transubstantiation; and we may add, hence also the decline of our theologian's interest with the nobility and worldly persons of all descriptions. To understand this rightly, we should constantly keep in view the distinction that is to be made between the applause which, in general, failed not to accompany Wickliff, as a censurer of gross immoralities and an advocate for religious liberty, and the cold approbation or sceptical reserve with which he was treated, considered as a preacher of the pure Gospel of Christ, and a reviver of the most important practical truths. In the former case he met with few to oppose or envy him, except those who were immediately interested in supporting vice or usurpation; but, in regard to the latter, the greater part of mankind did as they have often done in far more enlightened times; they either suspected that he carried his notions too far; or they kept aloof from him with a profane and indolent negligence; or lastly, they wavered between the religion in which they had been educated, and the Reformer's novelties, and by immersing them-

* Page 262 of this Vol.

selves in business, or in pleasure, both stifled the convictions of conscience, and escaped the dangers of persecution.

5. It will easily be conceived, that to accomplish Wickliff's views, one of the most popular, and at the same time most useful steps, which he could possibly have taken, was his translation of the Bible into the English language. The clergy indeed clamoured against the measure almost universally; and it may be instructive as well as entertaining to the reader, to see, by a short quotation from a learned canon* of Leicester, and a contemporary of Wickliff, what was thought to be good reasoning by the ecclesiastics of that day. "Christ," says he, "committed the Gospel to the clergy and doctors of the Church, that they might minister it to the laity and weaker persons, according to the exigency of times and persons wants; but this master John Wickliff, translated it out of Latin into English; and by that means laid it more open to the laity and to women who could read, than it used to be to the most learned of the clergy, and those of them who had the best understanding. And so the Gospel pearl is cast abroad and trodden under swine; and that which used to be precious to both clergy and laity, is made, as it were, the common jest of both; and the jewel of the Church is turned into the sport of the laity."

In our times, one cannot but be astonished, that the bishops, after much consultation, should have brought a bill into parliament to suppress Wickliff's Bible; but it was thrown out by a great majority.

The effect, which, under the direction of the good providence of God, the publication of the Holy Scriptures translated into our own language, produced on the minds of men, must have been very considerable in no great length of time: and it is not easy to conceive how any human means could contribute more to the spreading of the essential doctrines of Christianity. I wish that several diligent and spirited panegyrists of Wickliff had shown an anxiety, in their laudable researches into antiquity, to furnish instances of the conversion of our countrymen, from the ways of the world to the practice of godliness.

* Knyghton, de Event.

That many such instances did exist, through the indefatigable labours of Wickliff in public and in private, I doubt not; yet I mean not to insinuate, that if they had been recorded, they would have added much to the fame or celebrity of the Reformer, in the present circumstances of the world. There is indeed, in the Holy Scriptures, a most encouraging promise to those that be wise, and who shall "turn many unto righteousness:" but, it is not in this state of existence; it is when they shall awake from their sleep in the dust of the earth, that they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever *.

6. To return: Let the reader remember, that Wickliff not only published an English translation of the Bible; but also pleaded, in a very spirited and sensible manner, the RIGHT of the people to read the Scriptures †. All this tended the more to provoke the clergy, and to increase his popularity with the laity. Disinterested persons of every description, if they possessed the least degree of seriousness, and liberality of thinking, must have been gratified to have the Bible rescued from obscurity; though we may allow, without difficulty, that many sincere Roman catholics of the unlearned and weaker sort, may have been greatly puzzled and distressed in their minds, between the discoveries made to them by the Scriptures, and that mass of wretched superstition, which they had been accustomed to receive, all their days, with implicit faith.

If these facts and suggestions prove useful to the curious reader, who wishes to understand and settle the character of this extraordinary Reformer, and to account for the various lights, and, I might add, the various obscurities, in which he has been transmitted to us, I have gained my aim.—I shall conclude this whole narrative with two short quotations.

The first is from a very concise life of Wickliff, written by Dr. Thomas James, author of the Apology already mentioned.

* Dan. xii. 2, 3.

† Speculum secular: See the Appendix, Wickliff, for an account of this translation, and also for a specimen of it. Several other things worthy of the reader's notice are contained under the same head.

“ God gave Dr. Wickliff grace to see the truth of his Gospel, and by seeing it, to loath all superstition and popery By Abelard and others, he was grounded in the right faith of the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper ; by Bradwardine in the nature of a true sole-justifying faith against merit-mongers and pardoners, PELAGIANS and PAPISTS. Finally, by reading Grosseteste’s works, in whom he seemed to be most conversant, he descried the pope to be Antichrist.”

The second is a very solemn declaration of Wickliff, contained in one of his Latin tracts *.

“ Let God be my witness,” says he, “ that I principally intend the honour of God, and the good of the Church, from a spirit of veneration to the Divine Word, and of obedience to the law of Christ. But if, with that intention, a sinister view of vain-glory, of secular gain, or of vindictive malice, hath crept in unknown to myself, I sincerely grieve on the account, and, by the grace of God, will guard against it.”

Dr. James asks, “ What could be spoken more ingenuously, soberly, or christianly †.”

N. B. The following is a fine specimen of the clear, nervous, and even elegant style of Wickliff (if due allowance be made for the times). It is almost the whole of one of his tracts ; and is now among the MSS. in the library of Benet’ College, Cambridge.

WHY MANY PRIESTS HAVE NO BENEFICES.

Some Causes why poor Priests receive not Benefices :—
the first, for dread of symony ; the second, for dread of mispending poor men’s goods ; the third, for dread of letting of better occupation that is more light or easy, more certain and more profitable.

I. For, first, if men should come to benefices by gift of prelates, there is dread of symony. For commonly they taken the first fruits, or other pensions, or holden curates in office in their courts or chapels, in offices far fro priests life, taught, and ensampled of Christ and his apostles. So that commonly such benefices comen not freely as Christ commandeth, but rather for worldly win-

* De Ver. Script.

Dr. James’s Apology.

ning, or flattering of mighty men, and not for kunning of God's law, and true preaching of the Gospel, and ensample of holy life; and therefore commonly these prelates, and receivers ben fouled with symony, that is cursed heresy, as God's law and man's law techen. And now whoever can run to Rome, and bear gold out of the lond, and strive and plead, and curse for tithes, and other temporal profits, that ben cleped with antichrist's clerks rights of holy church, shall have great benefices of cure of many thousand souls, tho he be unable, and of cursed life, and wicked ensample of pride, of covetisse, glotony, leachery, and other great sins. But if there be any simple man, that desireth to live well, and teche truly God's law, he shall ben holden an hypocrite, a new teacher, an heretick, and not suffered to come to any benefice. But if in any little poor place he liven a poor life, he shall be so pursued, and slandered, that he shall be put out by wiles, cantels, frauds, and worldly violence, and imprisoned or brent. And if lords shullen present clerks to benefices, they wolen have commonly gold in great quantity, and holden these curates in some worldly office, and suffren the wolves of hell to stranglen men's souls, so that they have their office done for nought, and their chappels holden up for vain-glory or hypocrisy; and yet they wolen not present a clerk able of God's law, and of good life, and holy ensample to the people; but a kitchen-clerk, or a penny-clerk, or one wise in building castles, or other worldly doing; tho he kun not read his sauter, and knoweth not the commandments of God, ne sacraments of holy church. And yet some lords, to colouren their symony wole not take for themselves, but kerchiefs for the lady, or a palfray, or a tun of wine. And when some lords woulden present a good man, then some ladies ben means to have a dancer presented, or a tripper on tapits, or hunter, or a hawker, or a wild player of summer gambels. And thus it seemeth, that both prelates, and lords commonly maken some cursed antichrist, or a quick fiend to be master of Christ's people, for to leaden them to hell to Sathanas their master; and suffer not Christ's disciples to teche Christ's Gospel to his children for to save their souls.

But in this presenting of evil curates, and holding of

curates in worldly office, letting them fro their ghostly cure, ben three degrees of traitery agenst God and his people. The first is in prelates and lords, that thus holden curates in their worldly office, for they have their high states in the church, and lordships, for to purvey true curates to the people, and to meyntene them in God's law, and punish them, if they failen in their ghostly cure, and by this they holden their lordships of God. Then if they maken evil curates, and holden them in their worldly office, and letten them to lead God's people the rightful way to heaven, but helpen them, and constreynen them to lead the people to hell-ward, by withdrawing of God's word, and by evil ensample geving, they ben weiward traytors to God and his people, and vicars of Sathanas.—2. Yet more traitery is in false curates, that geven mede or hire to comen into such worldly offices, and to get lordship and maintenance agenst ordinances, and couchen in lord's courts for to get mo fatte benefices, and purposen not spedly to do their ghostly office. Woe is to the lords that ben led with such cursed heretics, antichrists, traytors of God and his people; and traytors to lords themselves; who ben so blinded, that they perceiven not that such traytors, that openly ben false to God, wolen much more ben false to them.—3. But the most traitery is in false confessors, that shulden by their office warn prelates, and lords of this great peril, and clerks also that they holden none such curates in their worldly offices. For they don not this, lest they lessen lordship, and friendship, and gifts, and welfare of their stinking belly; and so they sellen christen soul to Sathanas, and maken prelates and lords, and curates to live in sin and traitery agenst God and his people, and deceiven them in their soul's health, and meynntenen them in cursed traitery of God and his people; and thus almost all the world goeth to hell for this cursed symony of false confessors. For commonly prelates, lords and curates ben envenymed with this heresy of symony, and never done very repentance, and satisfaction therefore. For when they have a fat benefice geten by symony, they forsaken it not as they ben bounden by law, but wittingly usen forth that symony, and liven in riot, covetisse, and pride, and don not their office neither in good ensample, ne in true teching. And

thus antichrist's clerks, enemies of Christ, and his people, by money, and flattering, and fleshly love, gedring to them leading of the people, forbare true priests to teche God's law, and therefore the blind leadeth the blind, and both parts runnen into sin, and full many to hell: and it is huge wonder that God of his righteousness destroyeth not the houses of prelates, and lords, and curates, as Sodom and Gomor for heresie, extortions, and other cursednesses. And for dread of this sin, and many mo, some poor wretches receive no benefices in this world.

II. Yet tho poor priests mighten freely gotten presentation of lords to have benefices with cure of souls, they dreaden of mispending poor men's goods. For priests owen to hold themselves paide with food, and cloathing, as St. Paul techeth; and if they have more it is poor men's goods, as their own law, and God's law feyn, and they ben keepers thereof, and procurators of poor men. But for institution and induction he shall give much of this good, that is poor men's, to bishops' officers, archdeacons, and officials, that ben too rich. And when bishops and their officers comen, and feynen to visit, tho they nourishen men in open sin for annual rent, and don not their office, but sellen souls to Sathanas for money, wretched curates ben neded to feasten them richly, and give procuracy and synage, yea against God's law, and man's, and reason, and their own conscience, and yet they shullen not be suffered to teche truly God's law to their own subjects, and warn them of false prophets, who deceiven them both in belief and teching: for then they musten crie to the people the great sins of prelates; but they demen that such sad reproving of sin is envy, slandering of prelates, and destroying of holy church. Also many times their patrons willen look to be feasted of such curates, else maken them lese that little thing, that they and poor men shullen live by. So that they shullen not spend their tithes and offerings after good conscience, and God's laws, but waste them on rich and idle men. Also eche good day commonly these small curates shullen have letters fro their ordinaries to summon, and to curse poor men for nought, but for covetisse of antichrist's clerks; and if they not sumonen and cursen them, tho they know

no cause why, they shullen ben hurted, and summoned fro day to day, fro far place to farther, or cursed, or lese their benefits or profits. For else, as prelates feinen, they by their rebeldy shulden soon destroy prelates jurisdiction, power, and winning. Also, when poor priests, first holy of life, and devout in their prayers, ben benefited, if they ben not busy about the world to make great feasts to rich persons and vicars, and costly and gayly arrayed, by false doom of the world, they shullen be hated and hayned on as hounds, and ech man redy to peire them in name, and worldly goods. So many cursed deceits hath antichrist brought up by his worldly clerks to make curates to mispende poor men's goods, and not truly do their office ; or else to forsaken all, and let antichrist's clerks, as lords of this world, rob the poor people by feyned censures, and teche the fend's lore both by open preaching, and ensample of cursed life. Also, if such curates ben stirred to learn God's law, and teche their parishens the Gospel, commonly they shullen get no leave of bishops, but for gold ; and when they shullen most profit in their learning, then shullen they be clepid at home at the prelate's will. And if they shullen have any high sacraments, commonly they shulle buy them with poor men's goods ; and so there is full great peril of evil spending of these goods, both upon prelates, rich men of the country, patrons, parsons, and their own kyn, for fame of the world, and for shame, and evil deming of men. And certes it is great wonder that God suffreth so long this sin unpunished, namely of prelates' courts, that ben dens of thieves, and larders of hell ; and so of their officers, that ben sotil in malice and covetisse ; and of lords, and mighty men, that shulden destroy this wrong and other, and meyn-tenen truth, and God's servants, and now meyn-tenen antichrist's falsness and his clerks, for part of the winning. But certes God suffreth such hypocrites and tyrants to have name of prelates for great sins of the people, that eche part lead other to hell by blindness of the fend. And this is a thousand time more vengeance, than if God shud destroy bodily both parts, and all their goods, and earth therewith, as he did by Sodom and Gomor. For the longer that they liven thus in sin, the greater pains shullen

they have in hell, unless they amenden them.—And this dread, and many mo, maken some poor priests to receiven none benefices.

III. But yet tho poor priests mighten have freely presentation of lords, and ben holpen by meyntening of kings, and help of good commons fro extortions of prelates, and other mispending of these goods, that is full hard in this reigning of antichrist's clerks, yet they dreden sore that by singular cure ordained of sinful men they shulden be letted fro better occupation, and fro more profit of holy church. And this is the most dread of all; for they have cure and charge at the full of God to help their brethren to heavenward, both by teching, praying, and example-geving. And it seemeth that they shullen most easily fulfill this by general cure of charity, as did Christ and his Apostles. And by this they most sikerly save themselves, and help their brethren: and they ben free to flee fro one city to another, when they ben pursued of antichrist's clerks, as biddeth Christ in the Gospel. And they may best without challenging of men go and dwell among the people where they shullen most profit, and in covenable time come, and go after stirring of the Holy Ghost, and not be bounden by sinful men's jurisdiction fro the better doing. Also they pursuen Christ and his Apostles nearer, in taking alms wilfully of the people that they techen, than in taking dymes and offerings by customs that sinful men ordeynen, and usen now in the time of grace. Also this is more medeful on both sides as they understonden by Christ's life, and his Apostles: for thus the people geveth them alms more wilfully and devoutly, and they taken it more mekely, and ben more busy to lerne, kepe, and teche God's law, and so it is the better for both sides. Also by this manner might and shulde the people geve freely their alms to true priests that truly kepen their order, and taugh-ten the Gospel; and withdrawen fro wicked priests, and not to be constreyned to pay their tithes, and offerings to open cursed men to meyntene them in their open cursedness. And thus shulde symony, covetisse, and idleness of worldly clerks be laid down; and holiness, and true teching, and knowing of God's law be brought in both in clerks and lewid men: also thus shulde striving, pleading,

and cursing for dymes and offerings, and hate and discord among priests, and lewid men be ended ; and unity, peace, and charity meynntened. Also these benefices, by this course, that men usen now, bring in worldliness, and needless business about wordly offices, that Christ and his Apostles wolden never taken upon them, and yet they weren more mighty, more witty, and more brenning in charity to God, and to the people, both to live the best manner in themselves, and to teche other men. Also covetisse, and worldliness of the people shulden be done away ; and Christ's poverty, and his Apostles, by ensample of poor life of clerks, and trust in God, and desiring of heavenly bliss, shulde regne in christen people. Also then shulde priests study holy writt, and be devout in their prayers, and not be carried away with new offices, and mo sacraments than Christ used, and his Apostles, that taugh-ten us all truth. Also mochil blasphemy of prelates, and other men of feyned obedience, and nedless swearings made to worldly prelates shulden then cessen, and sovereyn obedience to God and his law, and eschewing of nedless othes shulde regne among christen men. Also then shulde men eschew commonly all the perils said before in the first chapter, and second, and many thousand mo, and live in clenness, and sikerness of conscience. Also then shulde priests be busy to seke God's worship and saving of men's souls, and not their own wordly glory and winning of worldly dritt. Also then shulden priests live like to angels, as they ben angels of office, whereas they liven now as swine in fleshly lusts, and turnen agen to their former sins for abundance of worldly goods, and idleness in their ghostly office, and overmuch business about this wretched life.

For these dreads and many thousand mo, and for to be mo like to Christ's life and his Apostles, and for to profit mo to their own souls and other men's, some poor priests thinken with God to traveile about where they shulden most profiten, by evidence that God geveth them, while they have time, and little bodily strength and youth. Nethless they damnen not curates that don well their office, and dwellen where they shullen most profit, and techen truly and stably God's law agenst false prophets, and cursed fends deceits.

Christ, for his endless mercy, help his priests and common people to beware of Antichrist's deceits, and go even the right way to heaven! Amen, Jesu, for thy endless charity.

CENTURY XV.

CHAP. I.

THE LOLLARDS.

TERMS of reproach have, in all ages, been applied to real Christians. Lollard, the name given to the followers of Wickliff, is to be considered as one of them. My chief reason for using it is, that the persons, whose story is the subject of this chapter, may be more distinctly defined.

That same Courtney, bishop of London, whose examination of Wickliff, together with the extraordinary circumstances which attended that examination, has been laid before the reader, afterwards became archbishop of Canterbury; and in that exalted station, employed himself with great vehemence and asperity against the disciples of the man who, by the protection of the duke of Lancaster, had escaped his vengeance. King Richard II. also was induced to patronise this persecution, though it does not appear that during his reign any of the Lollards were actually put to death. That the blind fury of ambitious and unprincipled men was thus, for a time, restrained from committing the last acts of injustice and barbarity, is to be ascribed, partly to the power of the duke of Lancaster, who may be called the political father of the Lollards; and partly to the influence of Anne, the consort of Richard II. and sister of Wenceslaus, king of Bohemia. The accounts of this princess, in regard to religion, are brief; yet they merit our particular attention, because they seem to illustrate the course of Divine Providence, in paving the way for that connexion between England and Bohemia, by which the labours of Wickliff became so serviceable in propagating the Gospel in the latter country. She lived

Death of
the Queen,
in

A. D. 1394.

with king Richard about eleven years; and died in the year 1394, in the seventeenth year of his reign*. It is remarked of her, that she had in her possession the Gospels in the English language, with four learned commentaries upon them. At her funeral, Arundel, archbishop of York, in his sermon adverted to this circumstance, and expressed much surprise at it, as she was born an alien. The prelate added, that she had sent to him, for his inspection and judgment, her four English translations of the Gospel, and that he had found them true and faithful. He confessed that it appeared to him a marvellous instance of godliness, that so great a lady would humbly condescend to study such excellent books: and he completed his encomium by declaring that he never knew a woman of such extraordinary piety. In the same sermon, he sharply rebuked the negligence of bishops and of others.

This relation may probably induce the reader to conjecture, that Arundel himself must have been almost a Lollard. At least he cannot but be both surprised and mortified to find, that shortly after the death of the good queen Anne, this same prelate, to the utmost of his power, stirred up the king to harass, throughout the whole kingdom, the very persons who should dare, in their native language, to read and study the Gospels of Jesus Christ.

Such inconsistencies are not uncommon in the annals of human nature.

About the same time, I find that several persons, who were accused of holding those speculative tenets of Wickliff, which I have allowed to be indefensible, did however, in their examinations, perfectly clear themselves of every reasonable suspicion of factious innovation†. In fact, the whole body of the Lollards in general, were in practice so perfectly void of offence, that speculative errors formed the only charge that could be brought against them; and even in regard to these errors, there seems reason to apprehend that the followers of Wickliff very much meliorated the sentiments of their master and leader. ONLY for the Gospel's sake they suffered; whatever might be the pretences of their enemies.

Fox, p. 578.

† Ib. p. 499, &c.

In the year 1397, died John de Trevisa, a gentleman born at Crocadon, in Cornwall; a secular priest, and vicar of Berkeley; a man, who translated many voluminous writings, and particularly the Bible into the English language. Thomas, lord Berkeley, his patron, induced him to undertake the last-mentioned work. This nobleman appears to have had a regard for the written word of God, which was little read or known in that age. He had the Apocalypse, in Latin and French, inscribed on the walls of his chapel at Berkeley. Trevisa was, also, distinguished for his aversion to the monastic system. "Christ," said he, "sent Apostles and presbyters, not monks and mendicant friars." He died in peace, almost ninety years old. Though neither this clergyman nor his patron are usually ranked among Lollards, yet do they seem to be sufficiently distinguished by their piety and veneration for the Scriptures to deserve a place in these memoirs. The period of history we are reviewing, is not so fruitful in godliness, as to allow us to pass over in silence such examples as these*.

Death of
John de
Trevisa,
A. D. 1397.

Richard II. being deposed, Henry of Lancaster, the son of that same John of Gaunt, who had patronised Wickliff, usurped the throne in the year 1399; and, shortly after, was crowned by Arundel, then archbishop of Canterbury. Both the king and the archbishop had demonstrated by their conduct, that they were ready to sacrifice every thing to their ambition. It is not therefore matter of surprise, either that the murderer of king Richard should proceed to persecute, with extreme barbarity, the Lollards, whom his father had so zealously protected; or that the archbishop, who had supported the usurper in his iniquitous pretensions to the crown, should also concur with him in his plan to crush those reformers. The power of the hierarchy was formidable to all men; and every one, who thirsted after secular greatness, found himself obliged, by political necessity, which is the primary law of unprincipled men, to court that power, and to obey its most unreasonable commands. Thus influenced, Henry IV.

Henry IV.
usurps the
throne,
A. D. 1399.

* Fuller's Church History, p. 151.

and Arundel commenced a persecution more terrible than any which had ever been known under the English kings. William Sawtre was the first man who was burnt in England for opposing the abominations of popery. He was a clergyman in London, who openly taught the doctrines of Wickliff. And though, through the weakness of human nature, he had revoked and abjured those doctrines before the bishop of Norwich, he afterwards recovered so much strength of mind, as to incur a second prosecution for his open confession of Evangelical truth before the archbishop. Among other charges, which it would be tedious to recount, this was one; "he had declared, that a priest was more bound to preach the word of God, than to recite particular services at certain canonical hours*." Such was the genius of the reigning superstition! The exposition of the word of God was looked on as a small matter, in comparison of the customary formalities. Sawtre, glorying in the cross of Christ, and strengthened by divine grace, suffered the flames of martyrdom in the year of our Lord fourteen hundred †.

Martyrdom
of Wm.
Sawtre,
A. D. 1400.

The name of John Badby, a low and illiterate workman, well deserves to be recorded for the honour of divine truth. Arundel took serious pains to persuade him, that the consecrated bread was really and properly the body of Christ. "After the consecration, it remaineth ‡," said Badby, "the same material bread which it was before; nevertheless it is a sign or sacrament of the living God. I believe the Omnipotent God in Trinity to be ONE. But if every consecrated host be the Lord's body, then there are twenty thousand gods in England." After he had been delivered to the secular power by the bishops, he was, by the king's writ, condemned to be burned. The Prince of Wales, happening to be present, very earnestly exhorted him to recant, adding the most terrible menaces of the vengeance which would overtake him, if he should continue in his obstinacy. Badby, however, was inflexible. As soon as he felt the fire, he cried, Mercy! The prince, supposing that he was entreating the mercy of his judges, ordered the fire to be

* Fox, p. 587.

† Wilkins, Convoc. p. 254—260.

‡ Fox, p. 594, and Wilkins, p. 326.

quenched. “Will you forsake heresy,” said young Henry; “and will you conform to the faith of the holy church? If you will, you shall have a yearly stipend out of the king’s treasury.” The martyr was un-
And of John Badby.
 moved; and Henry, in a rage, declared, that he might now look for no favour. Badby gloriously finished his course in the flames.

It was a marvellous instance of the strength of Christ made perfect in weakness, and a striking proof that God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, that a simple artificer should sustain the most cruel torments with patience and serenity, not only in defence of divine truth, but also of common sense; while the most dignified characters in the kingdom, and among these, the Prince of Wales, afterwards the renowned Henry V. gloried in defending one of the most egregious absurdities that ever disgraced the human understanding. What are all HIS victories and triumphs, of which English history is so proud, compared with the good sense and gracious spirit of J. Badby!

The conflict was now grown serious, and it behoved Henry to exercise the most rigorous measures of prevention, if he intended to repress all innovation, and to protect the established ecclesiastical system. Accordingly, he published a severe statute, by which grievous pains and penalties were to be inflicted on all, who should dare to defend or encourage the tenets of Wickliff; and this, in conjunction with a constitution of Arundel, too tedious* to be recited, seemed to threaten the total extinction of the heresy so called. The persecutors were extremely active; and many persons through fear recanted; but worthies were still found, who continued faithful unto death.

In the year 1413 died Henry IV.—His successor Henry V. trod in his steps, and countenanced Arundel, in his plans of extirpating the Lollards, and of supporting the existing hierarchy by penal
Death of Henry IV. A. D. 1413.
 coercions. In the first year of the new king’s reign, this archbishop collected in St. Paul’s church at London, a universal synod of all the bishops and clergy

* Wilkins, p. 314. Constitut. Arundel ex MS. Lamb.

of England. The principal object of the assembly was to repress the growing sect; and, as Sir John Oldcastle, lord Cobham, had on all occasions discovered a partiality for these reformers, the resentment of the archbishop and of the whole body of the clergy, was particularly levelled at this nobleman. Certainly, at that time, no man in England was more obnoxious to the ecclesiastics. For he made no secret of his opinions. He had very much distinguished himself in opposing the abuses of popery. At a great expense, he had collected, transcribed, and dispersed, the works of Wickliff among the common people without reserve; and it was well known that he maintained a great number of itinerant preachers in many parts of the country, particularly in the dioceses of Canterbury, Rochester, London and Hereford*.

But lord Cobham was a favourite both of the king and of the people; and therefore to effect his destruction was an undertaking that required much caution. The archbishop however was in earnest, and he concerted his measures with prudence.

His first step was to procure the royal mandate for sending commissioners to Oxford, whose business should be to examine and report the progress of heresy. These commissioners are, by Mr. Fox, not improperly called "the twelve inquisitors of heresies." The issue of their inquiries proved highly ungrateful to the hierarchy. They found Oxford overrun with heretics: they were, indeed, respectfully received by the rulers of the university, but the opinions of Wickliff had made their way among the junior students; and the talents and integrity of their master were held in high esteem and admiration by his disciples. This information, with many other minute particulars, Arundel laid before the grand convocation, who, after long debates, determined, that, without delay, the lord Cobham should be prosecuted as a heretic. Him they considered as the great offender: to his influence they ascribed the growth of heresy: he was not only, they said, an avowed heretic himself; but, by stipends, encouraged scholars from Oxford to propagate his opinions, many of which were in direct opposition to the senti-

* Fox, p. 635. Walden cont. Wiclev. Goodwin's Hen. V.

ments of the holy church of Rome; and lastly, he employed the disciples of Wickliff in preaching, though they had not obtained the licences of their respective bishops for that purpose. With great solemnity a copy of each of Wickliff's works was publicly burnt, by the enraged archbishop, in the presence of the nobility, clergy, and people; and it happened that one of the books burnt on this occasion, had belonged to lord Cobham. This circumstance tended much to confirm the assembly in their belief that that nobleman was a great encourager of the Lollards*.

At the moment when the convocation seemed almost in a flame, and were vowing vengeance against lord Cobham, some of the more cool and discreet members are said to have suggested the propriety of sounding how the young king would relish the measures they had in view, before they should proceed any further. Arundel instantly saw the wisdom of this advice, and he resolved to follow it.

For the purpose of giving weight to the proceedings, this artful primate, at the head of a great number of dignified ecclesiastics, complained most grievously to Henry, of the heretical practices of his favourite servant lord Cobham, and entreated his majesty to consent to the prosecution of so incorrigible an offender.

The affections of the king appear to have been, in some measure, already alienated from this unfortunate nobleman: Mr. Fox observes †, that he gently listened to those "blood-thirsty prelates, and far otherwise than became his princely dignity." But there is a circumstance which seems to have escaped the notice of this diligent searcher into ancient records. Through the management of the archbishop, the king's mind was previously impressed with strong suspicions of lord Cobham's heresy and enmity to the church. That very book above mentioned, which was said to belong to this excellent man, and which the convocation condemned to the flames, was read aloud before the king, the bishops, and the temporal peers of the realm: And the fragment of the account of these proceedings informs us, that Henry was exceedingly shocked at the

* Fox, p. 636. Collier, p. 632. Wilkins Concilia, p. 352. † Fox, p. 636.

recital; and declared that, in his life, he never heard such horrid heresy*. However, in consideration of the high birth, military rank, and good services of Sir John Oldcastle, the king enjoined the convocation to deal favourably with him, and to desist from all further process for some days: He wished to restore him to the unity of the church without rigour or disgrace; and he promised, that he himself, in the mean time, would send privately for the honourable knight, and endeavour to persuade him to renounce his errors.

The king kept his promise, and is said to have used every argument he could think of to convince him of the high offence of separating from the church; and at last, to have pathetically exhorted him to retract and submit, as an obedient child to his holy mother. The answer of the knight is very expressive of the frank and open intrepidity which distinguished his character. "You I am always most ready to obey," said he, "because you are the appointed minister of God, and bear the sword for the punishment of evil-doers. But, as to the pope and his spiritual dominion, I owe them no obedience, nor will I pay them any; for as sure as God's word is true, to me it is fully evident, that the pope of Rome is the great Antichrist foretold in Holy Writ, the son of perdition, the open adversary of God, and the abomination standing in the holy place." The extreme ignorance of Henry in matters of religion, by no means disposed him to relish such an answer as this: he immediately turned away from him in visible displeasure, and gave up the disciple of Wickliff to the malice of his enemies†.

Arundel, supported by the sovereign power, sent a citation to the castle of Cowling, where lord Cobham then resided. But feudal ideas were at that time no less fashionable than those of ecclesiastical domination. The high-spirited nobleman availed himself of his privileges, and refused admission to the messenger. The archbishop then cited him‡, by letters affixed to the great gates of the cathedral of Rochester; but lord Cobham still disregarded

* Fragmentum Convoc. Cantuar. ARUNDEL.

† Fox, p. 636. Goodwin, Henry V. ‡ Citacio Arund. Wilkins, p. 329.

the mandate. Arundel, in a rage, excommunicated him for contumacy, and demanded the aid of the civil power to apprehend him.

Cobham, alarmed at length at the approaching storm, put in writing a confession of his faith, delivered it to the king, and entreated his majesty to judge for himself, whether he had merited all this rough treatment. The king coldly ordered the written confession to be delivered to the archbishop. Lord Cobham then offered to bring a hundred knights, who would bear testimony to the innocence of his life and opinions. When these expedients had failed, he assumed a higher strain, and begged that he might be permitted, as was usual in less matters, to vindicate his innocence by the law of arms. He said he was ready, "in the quarrel of his faith," to fight for life or death, with any man living, the king and the lords of his council being excepted.

Lord
Cobham's
challenge.

Nothing can be said by way of extenuating so gross an absurdity, except that he had been educated in the military habits of the fourteenth century. And such was the wretched state of society in the reign of Henry V. whose history we are accustomed to read with so much pride and admiration, that no method of defence remained for this Christian hero, but what was as contrary to all ideas of justice and equity, as that by which he was persecuted. In the issue, Cobham was arrested by the king's express order, and lodged in the tower of London. The very zealous and honest Mr. Fox*, gives the following account of his first examination.

On the day appointed, Thomas Arundel, the archbishop, "sitting in Caiaphas' room, in the chapter-house of St. Paul's," with the bishops of London and Winchester, sir Robert Morley brought personally before him lord Cobham, and left him there for the time. Sir, said the primate, you stand here, both detected of heresies, and also excommunicated for contumacy. Notwithstanding, we have, as yet, neither shown ourselves unwilling to give you absolution, nor yet do to this hour, provided you would meekly ask for it.

Lord Cobham took no notice of this offer, but desired

* Pages 638 and 639.

permission to read an account of his faith, which had long been settled, and which he intended to stand to. He then took out of his bosom a certain writing, respecting the articles whereof he was accused, and when he had read it, he delivered the same to the archbishop.

He reads his
confession of
faith.

The contents of the paper were, in substance, these :

1. That the most worshipful sacrament of the altar is Christ's body in the form of bread.

2. That every man, who would be saved, must forsake sin, and do penance for sins already committed, with true and very sincere contrition.

3. That images might be allowable to represent and give men lively ideas of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the martyrdom and good lives of saints ; but, that if any man gave that worship to dead images which was due only to God, or put such hope or trust in the help of them as he should do in God, he became a grievous idolater.

4. That the matter of pilgrimages might be settled in few words. A man may spend all his days in pilgrimages, and lose his soul at last : but he, that knows the holy commandments of God and keepeth them to the end, shall be saved, though he never visited the shrines of saints, as men now do in their pilgrimages to Canterbury, Rome, and other places.

Then the archbishop informed the prisoner, that, though there were many good things contained in his paper, he had not been sufficiently explicit respecting several other articles of belief : and that upon these also his opinion would be expected. As a direction to his faith, he promised to send him, in writing, the clear determinations of the church ; and he warned him very particularly, to attend to this point ; namely, whether, in the sacrament of the altar, the material bread did, or did not, remain, after the words of consecration.

The gross superstition and unscriptural notions of the church at that time, are strikingly exhibited in this authentic determination of the primate and clergy, which, according to promise, was sent to the lord Cobham in the tower.

Articles of
faith sent to
lord Cobham.

1. The faith and determination of the Holy Church, touching the blissful sacrament of the altar, is this, that after the sacramental words be once spoken, by a priest in his Mass, "the material bread, that was before bread, is turned into Christ's very body ; and the material wine, that was before wine, is turned into Christ's very blood." And so there remaineth, thenceforth, neither material bread, nor material wine, which were there before the sacramental words were spoken.

2. Every christian man living here bodily on earth, ought to confess to a priest ordained by the church, if he can come to him.

3. Christ ordained St. Peter to be his vicar here on earth, whose see is the holy Church of Rome: And he granted that the same power, which he gave to Peter, should succeed to all Peter's successors ; whom we now call popes of Rome ; . . . and whom christian men ought to obey, after the laws of the Church of Rome.

4. Lastly, Holy Church hath determined, that it is meritorious to a christian man to go on a pilgrimage to holy places ; and there to worship holy reliques, and images of saints, apostles, martyrs, and confessors, approved by the Church of Rome.

On Monday, the day appointed for the next examination, Arundel accosted lord Cobham with an appearance of great mildness, and put him in mind, that, on the preceding Saturday, he had informed him, he was "accursed for contumacy and disobedience to the holy church ;" and had expected he would at that time have meekly requested absolution. The archbishop then declared, that even now it was not too late to make the same request, provided it was made in due form, as the church had ordained*.

Lord
Cobham's
second ex-
amination.

Amidst this very interesting narrative, let not my reader for a moment forget, that his historian is always in quest of evidences of the true faith of the Gospel exemplified in practice. The trial of lord Cobham, though in many points of view a gloomy tale, affords a remarkable and a very satisfactory evidence of this sort. This exemplary knight appears to have possessed the humility of a Chris-

* Fox, p. 639. Wilkins, p. 356.

tian, as well as the spirit of a soldier : for, he not only faithfully protested against the idolatry of the times, the fictitious absolutions, and various corruptions of popery, by which the creatures of the pope extorted the greatest part of the wealth of the kingdom ; but he also openly made such penitential declarations, and affecting acknowledgments of having personally broken God's commandments, as imply much salutary self-knowledge and self-abasement, strong convictions of sin, and bitter sorrow for the same, together with a firm reliance on the mercy of God through the mediation of Jesus Christ.

“ I never yet trespassed against you,” said this intrepid servant of God ; “ and therefore I do not feel the want of YOUR absolution.” He then kneeled down on the pavement ; and lifting up his hands to heaven, he said, “ I confess myself here unto thee, my eternal living God, that I have been a grievous sinner : How often in my frail youth have I offended thee by ungoverned passions, pride, concupiscence, intemperance ! How often have I been drawn into horrible sin by anger, and how many of my fellow-creatures have I injured from this cause ! Good Lord, I humbly ask thee mercy : here I need absolution.”

With tears in his eyes, he then stood up, and with a loud voice cried out, “ Lo ! these are your guides, good people. Take notice ; for the violation of God's holy law and his great commandments, they never cursed me : but, for their own arbitrary appointments and traditions, they most cruelly treat me and other men. Let them, however, remember, that Christ's denunciations against the Pharisees shall all be fulfilled.”

The dignity of his manner, and the vehemence of his expression, threw the court into some confusion. After the primate had recovered himself, he proceeded to examine the prisoner respecting the doctrine of transubstantiation. “ Do you believe, that after the words of consecration there remains any MATERIAL bread ? ” “ The Scriptures,” said Cobham, “ make no mention of MATERIAL bread ; I believe, that Christ's body remains in the FORM of bread. In the sacrament there is both Christ's body and the bread : the bread is the thing that we see with our eyes ; but the body of Christ is hid,

Acute answers
of lord
Cobham.

and only to be seen by faith*.” Upon which, with one voice, they cried, Heresy! heresy! One of the bishops, in particular, said vehemently, “That it was a foul heresy to call it bread!” Cobham answered smartly, “St. Paul, the Apostle, was as wise a man as you, and perhaps as good a Christian; and yet he calls it BREAD. The bread, saith he, that we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? To be short with you; I believe the Scriptures most cordially, but I have no belief in your lordly laws and idle determinations: ye are no part of Christ’s holy church, as your deeds do plainly show.” Doctor Walden, the prior of the Carmelites, and Wickliff’s great enemy, now lost all patience; and exclaimed, “What rash and desperate people are these followers of Wickliff!”

“Before God and man,” replied Cobham, “I solemnly here profess, that till I knew Wickliff, whose judgment ye so highly disdain, I never abstained from sin; but after I became acquainted with that virtuous man and his despised doctrines, it hath been otherwise with me; so much grace could I never find in all your pompous instructions.”

“It were hard,” said Walden, “that in an age of so many learned instructors, you should have had no grace to amend your life, till you heard the devil preach.”

“Your fathers,” said Cobham, “the old Pharisees, ascribed Christ’s miracles to Beelzebub, and his doctrines to the devil. Go on; and, like them, ascribe every good thing to the devil. Go on, and pronounce every man a heretic, who rebukes your vicious lives. Pray, what warrant have you from Scripture, for this very act you are now about? Where is it written in all God’s law, that you may thus sit in judgment upon the life of man? Hold—perhaps you will quote Annas and Caiaphas, who sat upon Christ and his Apostles!”

“Yes, sir,” said one of the doctors of law, “and Christ too, for he judged JUDAS.”

“I never heard that he did,” said lord Cobham. “Judas judged himself, and thereupon went out and hanged himself. Indeed Christ pronounced a wo against him, for his

* The learned reader cannot fail to observe, that both Wickliff and his followers seem sometimes to lean to the notion of consubstantiation.

covetousness, as he does still against you, who follow Judas' steps."

The examinations of lord Cobham are unmeasurably prolix. I have, therefore, chosen to select such passages from the tedious accounts *, as might best indicate the real dispositions of this DEFENDER OF THE FAITH. Though intrepid and high spirited to the last, he appears not to have given his enemies any advantage over him, by using rude and coarse language, or by bursts of passion. The proud and ferocious spirit of an ill-educated soldier seems to have been melted down into the meekness and humility of the Christian. His reproof of his judges was severe, but perfectly just: His deep and animated confession of his sins is both affecting and instructive; and his bold testimony, in those trying moments, to the virtues and excellencies of a character so obnoxious to his ecclesiastical judges as that of Wickliff, is exceedingly honourable to the memory both of the master and the scholar. I need not add, the same testimony covers their cruel and relentless adversaries with shame and disgrace.

We have seen, that lord Cobham, in the process of his trial, hinted at the lessons of divine grace, which he had learnt in the school of Wickliff. The intimation is by no means obscure; yet every pious reader, at the same time that he is delighted with finding this evidence of the sound christianity of Cobham, will lament with me, that there is not, on record, a larger and more distinct account both of his conversion, and of his private life and conversation. Such an account would give us a clearer insight into the religious character of this disciple of Wickliff, and might probably throw more light also on the practical tenets of that early reformer.

But we must be thankful for the documents we have. That distinct and impressive declaration of lord Cobham, concerning the change in his life from sin to the service of the living God, when we reflect on the awful and peculiar circumstances in which it was made, is in itself an inestimable fragment of ecclesiastical biography. This is that testimony of experience, which invincibly confirms

* I generally give the very words; though sometimes, for the sake of brevity, only the substance: and sometimes I put a modern phrase in the place of one now antiquated.

every real Christian in the belief of the truth of the doctrine, which he has been taught. He may be baffled in argument by men more acute and sagacious than himself; he may be erroneous in many less matters; he may want both learning and eloquence to defend that which he believes; but the doctrines of grace he knows to be of God, by the change which they have wrought in his soul. In this proof he knows all other views of religion, whether nominally christian or not, do totally fail.

At the conclusion of this long and iniquitous trial, the behaviour of lord Cobham was perfectly consistent with the tempers he had exhibited during the course of it. There remained the same undaunted courage and resolution, and the same christian serenity and resignation. Some of the last questions which were put to him, respected the worship of the cross; and his answers prove that neither the acuteness of his genius was blunted, nor the solidity of his judgment impaired.

One of the friars asked him, whether he was ready to worship the cross upon which Christ died.

Where is it? said lord Cobham.

But suppose it was here at this moment? said the friar.

A wise man indeed, said Cobham, to put me such a question; and yet he himself does not know where the thing is! But, tell me, I pray, what sort of worship do I owe to it?

One of the conclave answered; Such worship as St. Paul speaks of, when he says, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Right, replied Cobham, and stretched out his arms; THAT is the true and the very cross; far better than your cross of wood.

Sir, said the bishop of London, you know very well that Christ died upon a MATERIAL cross.

True, said Cobham; and I know also that our salvation did not come by that material cross, but by him who died thereupon. Further, I know well that St. Paul rejoiced in no other cross, but in Christ's passion and death ONLY, and in his own sufferings and persecutions, for the same truth which Christ had died for before*.

* Fox, p. 642. Convoc. prælat. Wilkins, p. 356.

Mr. Fox's account of these transactions, collected from ancient manuscripts, does not, in general, differ materially from the archbishop's own registers of the proceedings of the convocation. But there are some circumstances noted by Mr. Fox, which we may well suppose to have been designedly omitted in the registers last mentioned. For example, Mr. Fox informs us that the court were so amazed at the spirit and resolution of the lord Cobham, as well as at the quickness and pertinence of his answers, that they were reduced to a stand, "their wits and sophistry so failed them that day."

From Arundel's own reports it is sufficiently clear, that it was the custom of that artful primate to make, on these occasions, a great external show of lenity and kindness to the prisoners, at the very moment in which he was exercising towards them the most unrelenting barbarity. I observe in the case of William Sawtre, whose martyrdom we have already concisely related*, that when the archbishop degraded that faithful clergyman, pronounced him an incorrigible heretic, and delivered him to the secular power, he then, with the most consummate hypocrisy, requested the mayor and sheriffs of London to treat their prisoner *KINDLY*†, though he well knew they would dare to show him no other kindness, than that of burning him to ashes.

So in the trial of lord Cobham, nothing could exceed the mild and affable deportment of Arundel during the course of the examinations. The registers of Lambeth Palace inform us, that the archbishop repeatedly made use of the most "gentle, modest, and sweet terms" in addressing the prisoner; that with mournful looks he entreated him to return into the bosom of the Church; and that after he had found all his endeavours in vain, he was compelled with the bitterest sorrow to proceed to a definitive sentence.

"The day," said Arundel, "passes away fast; we must come to a conclusion." He then, for the last time, desired lord Cobham to weigh well the dilemma in which he stood: "You must either submit," said he, "to the

* Page 294 of this Volume.

† Wilkin's Concil. p. 260.—Fox, p. 589.

ordinances of the Church, or abide the dangerous consequences."

Lord Cobham then said expressly before the whole court, "My faith is fixed, do with me what you please."

The primate, without further delay, judged, and pronounced, sir John Oldcastle, the lord Cobham, to be an incorrigible, pernicious, and detestable heretic; and having condemned him as such, he delivered him to the secular jurisdiction *.

Lord Cobham condemned for heresy.

Lord Cobham, with a most cheerful countenance, said, "Though ye condemn my body, which is but a wretched thing, yet I am well assured ye can do no harm to my soul, any more than could Satan to the soul of Job. He, that created it, will of his infinite mercy save it. Of this I have no manner of doubt. And in regard to the articles of my belief, I will, BY THE GRACE OF THE ETERNAL GOD, stand to them, even to my very death." He then turned to the people, and stretching out his hands, cried with a very loud voice, "Good Christian people! for God's love, be well aware of these men; else, they will beguile you, and lead you blindfold into hell with themselves." Having said these words, he fell down upon his knees, and, lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, he prayed for his enemies in the following words: "Lord God Eternal! I beseech thee of thy great mercy to forgive my persecutors if it be thy blessed will!"

He was then sent back to the Tower, under the care of sir Robert Morley.

I was not surprised to find, that in Arundel's own report of this sad transaction, lord Cobham's prayer for his enemies is entirely omitted †. But the preceding address of this nobleman to the people, and his caution to them to beware of their blind guides, is, by the primate, placed immediately BEFORE the passing of the definitive sentence of condemnation. Mr. Fox, in his account, places that address immediately AFTER the sentence, and seems to have thought Arundel's representation of this circumstance incorrect, for he pointedly tells us, that respecting this

* Rymer, Vol. IX. p. 61—66.—Fox, p. 642 & 3.

† Acta Convoc. prov. Cantuar.—Arundel, 18.

very matter, his own two copies of these proceedings agreed with each other*.

Though the ecclesiastical judges of lord Cobham, by condemning him as a heretic, and delivering him to the secular power for the execution of their sentence, appear to have done their utmost to complete the destruction of the man whom they feared and hated, there is yet reason to believe that both the king and the archbishop remained in some perplexity respecting this business. In religious concerns, this able monarch seems to have entirely resigned his understanding to the direction of the clergy; and therefore we need not wonder that he was highly provoked with lord Cobham for his opposition to the Church, and still more for his incurable obstinacy, in adhering to heretical sentiments, after that his sovereign had personally condescended to persuade him to recant. Yet, after all, it is not improbable that such a prince as Henry V. should still retain some esteem for the character of the prisoner in the Tower, who on many occasions had formerly distinguished himself by his valour and military talents. Though the memory of Henry is by no means free from the imputation of cruelty, it must at least be admitted, that the present situation of Cobham was likely to soften animosity, and to revive in the king's mind any latent affection for his favourite. Even Walsingham, a bigoted papist, and bitter enemy of the Lollards, though in many respects a very useful historian, says, that Cobham, "for his integrity, was dearly beloved by the king †."

This same ancient historian informs us, that the archbishop in person went to the king, and requested his majesty to postpone, for the space of fifty days, the punishment of lord Cobham ‡. If this be true, the motives of Arundel can be no great mystery. The persecution of this virtuous knight was a most unpopular step. His rank and character, and his zeal for the doctrines of Wickliff, had pointed him out to the primate as a proper victim of ecclesiastical severity; but his condemnation involved, in a general odium, the rulers of the Church who had been

* Fox, p. 643.
acceptus.—Walsingham, Henry V.

† Regi propter probitatem charus et
‡ Page 385.

his judges. It was necessary, therefore, to temporize a little ; and before the whole sect of the Lollards were to be terrified by the public execution of a person so highly esteemed as lord Cobham, it was thought expedient to employ a few weeks in lessening his credit among the people by a variety of scandalous aspersions. Mr. Fox assures us, that his adversaries scrupled not to publish a recantation in his name ; and that lord Cobham directed a paper to be posted up in his own defence, and in contradiction to the slander.

But, whether the lenity of the king, or the politic caution of the clergy, was the true cause of the delay, it is certain, that lord Cobham was not put to death immediately after being condemned for a heretic. He remained some weeks in the Tower, and at length by unknown means made his escape : So that it is now impossible to say, whether the clergy would ultimately have pressed the sovereign to proceed to extremities in this instance, or, whether Henry could have been induced to commit to the flames, for heresy, a favourite of such exalted rank and high reputation. For as yet, there had not been any instance of a nobleman suffering in that ignominious manner.

He escapes
from the
Tower.

After lord Cobham had escaped out of the Tower, he is said to have taken the advantage of a dark night, evaded pursuit, and arrived safe in Wales, where he concealed himself more than four years*. If he had remained in prison, he would have effectually prevented the calumny with which the papists have endeavoured to load his memory ; nevertheless, when we reflect on the intrepid spirit of the man, his unshaken resolution, and the cruel, unjust treatment he met with, we cannot wonder at his eagerness to fly from those flames, which his persecutors ardently longed to kindle. It seems as easy to comprehend lord Cobham's motives for wishing to escape, as it is difficult to censure them.

The clergy were not a little mortified to find, that this grand heretic and destined victim, had slipped out of their hands ; and their uneasiness was increased, by observing that the king discovered no anxiety to have lord Cobham

* Bale.—Gilpin.

retaken. Soon after this event, however, a very remarkable transaction afforded them every advantage they could wish, to gratify their resentment against the NOBLE CHIEF of the Lollards. These peaceable and truly christian subjects had been accustomed to assemble in companies for the purposes of devotion ; but the bishops represented their meetings as of a seditious tendency, and they found no great difficulty in obtaining a royal proclamation* for suppressing the conventicles of persons who were supposed to be ill inclined to the government. Historians have observed that “jealousy was the ruling foible of the house of Lancaster ;” and though Henry V. was naturally of a noble and magnanimous temper, he could never forget that he was an usurper : His suspicions of the evil designs of the Lollards increased to a high degree : He thought it necessary to watch them as his greatest enemies ; and he appears to have listened to every calumny, which the zeal and hatred of the hierarchy could invent or propagate against the unfortunate followers of Wickliff.

The royal proclamation, however, did not put an end to the assemblies of the Lollards. Like the primitive Christians, they met in SMALLER companies, and more privately, and often in the dead of night. St. Giles's Fields, then a thicket, was a place of frequent resort on these occasions. And here a number of them
 A.D. 1414. assembled in the evening of January the sixth, 1414 ; with an intention, as was usual, of continuing together to a very late hour.

The king was then at Eltham, a few miles from London. He received intelligence, that lord Cobham, at the head of twenty thousand of his party, was stationed in St. Giles's Fields, for the purpose of seizing the person of the king, putting their persecutors to the sword, and making himself the regent of the realm.

The mind of Henry, we have seen, had been prepared, by the diligent and artful representations of the clergy, to receive any impressions against the Lollards, which might tend to fix upon that persecuted sect the charges of seditious or treasonable practices. To his previous sus-

* Rymer, Vol. IX.

pitions, therefore, as well as to the gallantry of his temper, we are to ascribe the extraordinary resolution which the king took on this occasion. He suddenly armed the few soldiers he could muster, put himself at their head, and marched to the place. He attacked the Lollards, and soon put them into confusion. About twenty were killed, and sixty taken*. Among these was one Beverley, their preacher, who with two others, sir Roger Acton, and John Brown, was afterwards put to death. The king marched on, but found no more bodies of men. He thought he had surprised only the advanced guard, whereas he had routed the whole army!!

This extraordinary affair is represented by the popish writers as a real conspiracy; and it has given them occasion to talk loudly against the tenets of the reformers, which could encourage such crimes. Mr. Hume, also, has enlisted himself on the same side of the question; and, in the most peremptory and decisive manner, has pronounced lord Cobham guilty of high treason†.

After what has been so lately observed concerning the lamentable prejudices of this most valuable historian, little more can now be necessary, than barely to put the reader in mind, that Cobham and many of the Lollards evidently belonged to the true Church of Christ, and bore with patience the cross of their Master. We may briefly add, that the ingenious, and on many occasions, the sceptical Mr. Hume, instead of affirming that "the treasonable designs of the sect were rendered certain, both from evidence, and from the confession of the criminals themselves," would have done better to have recollected, that the testimony of Walsingham, a violent partisan, merits, in this particular instance, very little attention. When I had reviewed Mr. Fox's able and satisfactory vindication of lord Cobham, I was astonished at the positiveness of our elegant historian, Mr. Hume, in this matter. The martyrologist, with great diligence and judgment, has examined all the authentic documents, and argued most powerfully against the supposition of any conspiracy. Mr. Hume, on the contrary, gives implicit credit to the

* Rapin, Henry V.

† Hume, Henry V.

most improbable accounts* ; and he could not but know that the Lollards had not then a friend on earth.

Though the entire combination of church and state, in the reign of Henry V. against this religious sect, prevents us from being furnished with positive and direct proof of their innocence, the reader, after what has been stated, will be disposed, no doubt, to acquit them of all treasonable views in the affair of St. Giles's Fields. And this persuasion will be strengthened by considering that this is the only instance on record, in which they have been accused of turbulent or seditious behaviour. The Lollards are described, in general, as having been always peaceable, and submissive to authority.

Rapin observes†, that the persons assembled on that occasion, "had unhappily brought arms with them for their defence, in case they should be attacked by their persecutors." If we regulate our judgments according to modern notions and habits, this circumstance must appear very suspicious ; but not so, if we recollect that the practice of providing arms for the purpose of self-defence, was by no means an unusual precaution in those violent times.

Neither ought much stress to be laid on the confession of several, who were made prisoners by the king. Among those that were taken, says the historian last mentioned, there were some, who, "gained by promises, or awed by threats, confessed whatever their enemies desired." Besides, it is extremely probable, that popish emissaries mixed themselves among the Lollards, for the express purpose of being brought to confession ; and it has been well observed, that most likely, the very persons, who pretended to find arms on the field, could have best pointed out the original concealers of them.

Nothing can be more judicious than Rapin's observations on this whole transaction. "It is hardly to be conceived," says this historian, "that a prince so wise as Henry, could suffer himself to be imposed on by so gross a fiction. Had he found, indeed, as he was made to believe, twenty thousand men in arms in St. Giles's Fields, it would have been very suspicious : but, that fourscore or a hundred men, among whom there was not a single

* Such are the accounts of Hall, &c. † History of England, Henry V.

person of rank, should have formed such a project, as that of seizing the king's person, is extremely improbable. Besides he himself knew sir John Oldcastle to be a man of sense; and yet nothing could be more wild than the project fathered upon him; a project, which it was supposed he was to execute with a handful of men, without being present himself, and without its being known where he was, or that there was any other leader in his room. Notwithstanding the strictest search made through the kingdom to discover the accomplices of this pretended conspiracy, not a SINGLE person could be found besides those taken at St. Giles's. Lastly, the principles of the Lollards were very far from allowing such barbarities. It is therefore more than probable, that the accusation was forged, to render the Lollards odious to the king, with a view to gain his license for their persecution."

The conduct of those in power in the Church at that time was so completely flagitious and unprincipled, that it is impossible to review their usual mode of proceeding against those, whom they termed heretics, without entertaining suspicions similar to those which have occurred to Rapin; suspicions of forged accusations and of pretended or extorted confessions. This consideration adds much weight to the solid reasonings of this very candid and upright historian.

It has been supposed that, in process of time, the king disbelieved the report of any actual conspiracy in this transaction: and it must be confessed, that when we reflect on the great understanding and military skill of this prince, it seems extraordinary, that he should not at the first have reflected, that the very marshalling of such a number of soldiers, and the furnishing of them with necessaries, could never have been managed with secrecy. He appears, however, to have given sufficient credit to the calumny to answer all the designs of the ecclesiastical rulers. He became thoroughly incensed against the Lollards, and particularly against the lord Cobham. A bill of attainder against that unfortunate nobleman passed the commons, through the royal influence*: The king set a price of a thousand marks upon his head, and promised

* Gilpin.

a perpetual exemption from taxes to any town, that should secure him*.

It was to be expected that these strong measures, aided by the active zeal and unrelenting hatred of his enemies, should be effective to the discovery of lord Cobham : and, it is matter of some surprise, how he was able, for several years, to elude the vigilance of the many, who narrowly watched him. Wales was his asylum ; and he is supposed to have frequently changed the scene of his retreat. Through the diligence of lord Powis, and his dependents, he was at length discovered and taken. It was on the tenth of October, 1413, that lord Cobham was, by Arundel, condemned as a heretic and sent to the Tower. The affair of St. Giles's happened on the evening of the sixth of January 1414 ; and it was not till nearly the end of the year 1417, that this persecuted Christian was apprehended and brought to London.

His fate was soon determined. He was dragged into St. Giles's Fields with all the insult and barbarity of enraged superstition ; and there, both as a traitor and a heretic, he was suspended alive in chains, upon a gallows, and burned to death.

This excellent man, by a slight degree of dissimulation might have softened his adversaries, and have escaped a troublesome persecution and a cruel death. But, sincerity is essential to a true servant of Jesus Christ ; and lord Cobham died, as he had lived, in the faith and hope of the Gospel ; and, bearing, to the end, a noble testimony to its genuine doctrines ; and, “ choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season†.”

One of lord Cobham's very great admirers has said, that the novelty of Wickliff's opinions first engaged his curiosity ; that he examined them as a philosopher, and in the course of his examination became a Christian.

I know not upon what ground this is affirmed ; but it might be so ; nevertheless I feel assured that if we had lord Cobham's own account of his conversion, this representation of the matter would appear, at least, very defective ; moreover, from the little which he did say, on his

* Rapin.—Rymer.

† Heb. xiv. 25.

trial, respecting Wickliff's doctrines, and from the very feeling manner in which he appears to have delivered that little*, I think it extremely probable, that the preaching and expounding of the true Gospel of Christ, by Wickliff, and his disciples, had been the means of affecting the CONSCIENCE of this worthy personage, and of convincing him of sin. This has been found the usual way in which the Spirit of God operates salutary changes on the minds of fallen creatures. The philosophical method has a plausible appearance, but fails in practice.

Lord Cobham is allowed to have been a man of learning: and his knowledge of the Holy Scriptures is incontestable. The aptness of his quotations, and his promptitude in producing scriptural arguments, were displayed in a very striking manner, through the whole course of his examination before the bishops. At the time when he was seized and made prisoner in Wales, Henry V. was making conquests in Normandy; and a parliament was then sitting in London, for the purpose of supplying the sovereign with money to carry on his wars. The records of that parliament inform us, that on the eighteenth of December, 1417, sir John Oldcastle was brought before the lords, and that he made no answer to the crimes laid to his charge†. No doubt he was thoroughly convinced that all attempts to exculpate himself would be vain and fruitless. The clergy, during the last three or four years, had gained a complete ascendancy both in parliament and in the cabinet; Arundel died in 1414; and was succeeded by Chicheley, who soon showed himself to be a primate, both of more art and ability, and also of more zeal and courage, than his predecessor. Ecclesiastical tyranny and superstition seemed now at their height; and it required much less sagacity than that of lord Cobham, to see that in the present circumstances, any witnesses, which he could produce, would be overawed or disregarded amidst the imprecations of the priests and monks; and that a close and cruel confederacy of power, prejudice and resentment, would be impenetrable to argument and eloquence.

Examination
of sir John
Oldcastle be-
fore the
Lords,

A. D. 1417.

Death of
Arundel,

A. D. 1414.

* Page 303 of this Vol.

† Cotton's Abridgment.

It was now, therefore, become the duty of lord Cobham, patiently to resign himself to the will of his Maker, and to seek for comfort by meditations on the sacred Scriptures. That he did so, I collect with no small satisfaction, from a single expression of the ancient memorialist Walsingham, which does not appear to have been taken notice of by succeeding writers. This author informs us, that the prisoner was examined in the presence of the duke of Bedford, then regent of England; and being pressed closely to give answers respecting the insurrection in St. Giles's Fields, and his other treasonable offences, his reply, after a short pause, was, "With me it is a very small thing, that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment*:" and then, says the scornful annalist, he again proceeded to PRATE IMPERTINENTLY †.

Yet this, the reader should remember, is the very author, on whose assertions, principally, Mr. Hume grounded his belief, that lord Cobham was guilty of treason. We have before observed ‡ that, on that question, our elegant historian appears to have been credulous in the extreme; and, as he had no great taste for scriptural quotations, it is by no means improbable, that he also further agreed with Walsingham in blaming the prisoner for his "impertinent garrulity." Serious persons, however, who listen with reverence to the written word of God, will view the matter in a different light. That such a passage of Scripture should have been actually quoted by lord Cobham, then in the power of enraged and merciless adversaries, seems to be extremely likely; and not the less so, because recorded by Walsingham, a violent and prejudiced enemy of all the Lollards. In regard to the quotation itself, by suggesting the littleness and insignificance of all HUMAN judgments and determinations, in comparison of the DIVINE, it conveyed a wise and salutary admonition to the existing hierarchy, who, at that moment, were uncommonly inflated with dominion and "drunken with the blood of the saints§:" and at the same time, it must have produced in the minds of all, WHO HAD EARS TO HEAR, a strong conviction of this important truth, that the knight,

* 1 Cor. iv. 3d verse.

† Et iterum impertinenter garrulare cæpit, donec Walsingham, p. 400.

‡ Page 311.

§ Rev. xvii. 6.

who was thus persecuted for righteousness' sake, had made no rash choice in renouncing the love of the world, and thereby demonstrating that the love of the Father was in him*. Every pious Christian will, I doubt not, accord with me in these ideas; and be gratified to find, that "MAN'S JUDGMENT," however severe and cruel, was "a very small thing," in lord Cobham's estimation; and that when all earthly supports must have failed, this martyr for the Gospel of Christ, steadily fixed his eye on God's JUDGMENT, and derived all his hope and comfort from that single source.

At the time of his execution, many persons of rank and distinction were present; and the ecclesiastics are said to have laboured to the utmost to prevent the people from praying for him. Lord Cobham, however, resigned himself to a painful and ignominious death, "with the utmost bravery and most triumphant joy, exhorting the people to follow the instructions which God had given them in the Scriptures; and to disclaim those false teachers, whose lives and conversation were so contrary to Christ and his religion†."

Henry Chicheley, now archbishop of Canterbury, continued at the head of that see, from February 1414, to April 1443‡. This man deserves to be called A.D. 1414. the firebrand of the age in which he lived. To subserve the purposes of his own pride and tyranny, he engaged king Henry in his famous contest with France, by which a prodigious carnage was made of the human race, and the most dreadful miseries were brought upon both kingdoms. But Henry was a soldier, and understood the art of war, though perfectly ignorant of religion; and that ardour of spirit, which, in youth, had spent itself in vicious excesses, was now employed, under the management of Chicheley, in desolating France, by one of the most unjust wars ever waged by ambition, and in furnishing for vulgar minds matter of declamation on the valour of the English nation. While this scene was carrying on in France, the archbishop at home, partly by exile, partly by forced abjurations, and partly by the flames, domi-

* 1 John ii. 15.

† Lewis's account of Wickliff's followers.

‡ Biograph. Britan.—Henry's Hist. Book V.

neered over the Lollards ; and almost effaced the vestiges of godliness in the kingdom.

This was one of the most gloomy seasons, which the Church ever experienced. The doctrines of Wickliff, indeed, had travelled into Bohemia ; but, as we shall afterwards see, the fires of persecution were also lighted up in that country, at the same time that in England no quarter was given to any professors of the pure religion of Christ. Even the duke of Bedford, the brother of the king*, one of the wisest men of his age, thought it no dishonour to be the minister of Chicheley's cruelties. A chaplain of lord Cobham, through terror of punishment, was induced to recant his creed : the strictest search was made after Lollards and their books ; and while a few souls, dispersed through various parts, sighed in secret, and, detesting the reigning idolatry, worshipped God in spirit and in truth, they yet found no HUMAN consolation or support whatever. The principal use to be made of these scenes, is to excite a spirit of thankfulness for the superior privileges of the times in which we live.

The diocese of Kent was particularly exposed to the bloody activity of Chicheley. Whole families were obliged to relinquish their places of abode, for the sake of the Gospel.

In the midst of these tragedies, and in the year 1422, died Henry V. whose military greatness is known to most readers. His vast capacity and talents for

Death of
Henry the Vth.

A. D. 1422. government, have been also justly celebrated. But what is man without the genuine fear of God ? This monarch, in the former part of his life, was remarkable for dissipation and extravagance of conduct ; in the latter, he became the slave of the popedom ; and for that reason, was called the PRINCE OF PRIESTS. Voluptuousness, ambition, superstition, each in their turn, had the ascendant in this extraordinary character. Such, however, is the dazzling nature of personal bravery and of prosperity, that even the ignorance and folly of the bigot, and the barbarities of the persecutor, are lost or forgotten amidst the enterprises of the hero and the successes of the conqueror. Reason and justice lift up their voice in vain.

* Fox, page 729.

The great and substantial defects of Henry V. must hardly be touched on by Englishmen. The battle of Agincourt throws a delusive splendour around the name of this victorious king.

The persecution of the Lollards continued during the minority of Henry VI. William Taylor, a priest, was burnt, because he had asserted, that every prayer, which is a petition for some supernatural gift, is to be directed only to God*. The four orders of friars were directed by the archbishop to examine him; and they convicted him of heresy, for asserting a maxim, which peculiarly distinguishes true religion from idolatry.

William
Taylor, a
priest, burnt.

Not to dwell on the cases of many persons of less note, who suffered much vexation in this calamitous period of the Church, it may be proper to mention William White, who, by reading, writing, and preaching†, exerted himself in Norfolk so vigorously that he was condemned to the stake in 1424. His holy life and blameless manners had rendered him highly venerable in that county. He attempted to speak to the people before his execution, but was prevented. It is remarkable, that his widow, following her husband's footsteps in purity of life and in zeal for the Gospel, confirmed many persons in evangelical truth; on which account she was exposed to much trouble from the bishop of Norwich.

Martyrdom
of William
White,
A.D. 1424.

Nor did the civil wars between the houses of York and Lancaster, which filled the whole kingdom with confusion, put an end to the persecution of the Lollards. A person, named John Gooze, was burnt at the Tower-hill, in the reign of Edward IV. in the year 1473‡. This victim was delivered to one of the sheriffs, with an order to have him executed in the afternoon. The officer, compassionating the case of the prisoner, took him to his own house, and endeavoured to prevail on him to retract. But the martyr, after listening to a long exhortation, desired him to forbear: and then, in strong terms, requested something to eat, declaring he was become very hungry. The sheriff

Of John
Gooze,
A.D. 1473.

* Fox, p. 749.

† Ibid. p. 752.

‡ Ibid. p. 814.

complied with his request. "I eat now a good dinner," said the man very cheerfully, "for I shall have a brisk storm to pass through before supper." After he had dined, he gave thanks to God, and desired to be led to the place, where he should give up his soul to his Creator and Redeemer.

The civil contests with which the kingdom were convulsed, were at length terminated by the union of the two houses of York and Lancaster, at the accession of Henry VII. But the Church of God continued still an unremitted object of persecution. The sufferings of the Lollards were even greater during the established governments of Henry VII. and Henry VIII. than they had been during the civil wars. To give a minute detail of all the horrid cruelties that were inflicted on those who were condemned as heretics for reading the Scriptures, and for denying popish superstitions, is not the object of these memoirs. It may be sufficient to remark, that all, who were convicted of what was then called heresy, and adhered to their opinions, were first condemned as obstinate heretics, afterwards delivered to the secular arm, and lastly burnt to ashes, without mercy, and without exception*. Neither age nor sex were spared. Mr.

Many
Martyrs,

A.D. 1521. Fox has collected, from the registers of the diocese of Lincoln, for the year 1521, a most shocking catalogue, both of the accusers and of the victims, who suffered under the grievous and cruel persecution of bishop Langland, the king's confessor. He has also, with singular industry, recorded the particular names of many, who, through fear of a painful death, renounced their faith during the memorable persecution of that same year. Upon these unfortunate persons, various penances, and many very severe and ignominious punishments, were inflicted. Several, who were found to have abjured before, were condemned for relapse, and committed to the flames †.

A concise account of a person named John Brown, of Ashford, in Kent, shall conclude this distressing detail of the sufferings of the Lollards.

This martyr suffered in the year 1511, under the per-

* Henry's Hist. of Britain.

† See Appendix, Lollards.

secution of William Warham, archbishop of Canterbury.

He was discovered to be a heretic, as follows *:

A slight altercation had taken place between him and a priest, as they were both passing down to Gravesend, in the common barge. The priest

perceived symptoms of heresy; and immediately upon landing, lodged, with the archbishop, an information against Brown. The man was suddenly apprehended by two of the archbishop's servants, who, by means of assistants, placed him on his own horse, bound his feet under the horse's belly, and carried him to Canterbury, where he remained in confinement forty days; during which time neither his wife, nor any of his friends, could receive the smallest intimation concerning him.

At length he was brought to Ashford, the town where he lived, and placed in the stocks. It was now almost night; but, one of his own female domestics, in passing by the place, happened to become acquainted with his situation; and she instantly carried home to her mistress the afflicting news. His mournful wife sat near her husband all the night, and heard him relate the melancholy story of every thing that had happened to him. The treatment this good man had met with, from Warham, the archbishop of Canterbury, and from Fisher †, bishop of Rochester, was infamous in the extreme. With unparalleled barbarity, they had directed his bare feet to be placed upon hot burning coals; and to be kept there, till they were burnt to the bones. Notwithstanding all

* Fox, p. 551.

† Fisher was born at Beverley in Yorkshire, in 1459. He was educated at Cambridge, and became Master or President of Queen's College in that University. He was made bishop of Rochester in 1504. It was during the time of his presidentship that Erasmus came to study at Cambridge, and took up his residence at Queen's College. This prelate was beheaded, by Henry VIII. in 1535, for denying the king's supremacy, and for speaking with freedom in behalf of the queen. The pope was so pleased with his conduct, that, even while Fisher was confined in the Tower and attainted of high treason, he made him a cardinal, and sent him the proper hat belonging to that dignity. Henry was so much provoked, that he would not permit the hat to be brought into the kingdom: he also sent Cromwell to sound bishop Fisher, whether he intended to accept it. "Yes," said Fisher. The king then exclaimed with an oath, "Well; let the pope send him the hat when he pleases, he shall wear it on his shoulders, for I will leave him never a head to set it on." The tyrant was as good as his word.—Erasmus speaks of Fisher in strong terms of commendation.

this, Brown would not deny his faith, but patiently endured the pain, and continued immoveable, fighting manfully the "good fight." To his wife he then said, "The bishops, good Elizabeth, have burnt my feet, till I cannot set them on the ground : they have done so to make me deny my Lord : but, I thank God, they will never be able to make me do that ; for, if I should deny HIM in this world, he would deny me hereafter. Therefore, I pray thee, continue, as thou hast begun, and bring up thy children in the fear of God. Thy husband is to be consumed at the stake to-morrow."

He was burnt on Whitsun-even, lifting up his hands, and uttering the most fervent prayers, particularly the words of the Psalmist, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit ; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth *."

Such were the sanguinary methods by which the prelates of England attempted to extirpate Lollardism and heresy. And they so far succeeded, that the few disciples of Wickliff, who still remained alive, seem to have been afterwards confounded with the favourers of the **GRAND REFORMATION** : but, in their main object of strengthening the Roman Catholic religion, they utterly failed. The burning of heretics was found to be not the way to extinguish heresy. On the contrary, both in England and on the Continent, such detestable cruelty increased the compassion of the people for the sufferers, excited their indignation against the persecutors, and roused a spirit of inquiry and of opposition to the existing hierarchy, which at length, under the direction of a kind, overruling Providence, proved fatal both to papal corruptions of sound doctrine, and also to papal usurpation of dominion.

When the human mind has been thus fatigued and disgusted with a review of the cruelties of popish persecutors, it is disposed to pronounce the Roman religion wholly a pretence, and all the ecclesiastical judges and rulers of those times, barbarous hypocrites and deceivers. "It is impossible," we are apt to say, "but that natural conscience should have informed them they were doing

* Mr. Fox tells us, he had this account from Brown's own daughter.

wrong, in committing to the flames, for slight differences of opinion, so many innocent victims; nay, often, persons of the most exemplary life and conversation." However, a more cool and sedate reflection may convince us, that though, in all ages, there have existed wicked men of great ability, who have shown themselves ever ready to sacrifice principle and conscience to their ambition and avarice, and even to wade through much blood in support of their darling objects, yet ALL tormentors of the human race have not been precisely of this class. These are of the first magnitude, and we suppose them to have had their eyes open. But there are others, who knew not what they did *; and towards such, therefore, though we are never to palliate their faults, much less to defend their enormities, yet are we bound to exercise an equitable discrimination. The reader will understand me to have in view those deluded votaries, who have had the misfortune to be taught, and the weakness to believe, that the favour of God is to be obtained, chiefly by paying a scrupulous regard to external forms and observances.—The following remarkable paragraph is extracted from a popish writer †, and will serve to explain my meaning still further.

"The disciples of Wickliff are men of a serious, modest deportment; avoiding all ostentation in dress, mixing little with the busy world, and complaining of the debauchery of mankind. They maintain themselves wholly by their own labour, and utterly despise wealth; being fully content with bare necessities. They follow no traffic, because it is attended with so much lying, swearing, and cheating. They are chaste and temperate; are never seen in taverns, or amused by the trifling gayeties

* Luke xxiii. 34.

† Sancho Reinher.—This Sancho Reinher was an apostate, and a persecutor of the Waldenses, in the thirteenth century. Mark well his account of these good men. "Among all sects, none is more pernicious than that of the POOR OF LYONS, for three reasons: 1. It is the most ancient. Some aver their existence from the days of Sylvester; others from the very time of the Apostles. 2. Because it is so universal; for there is hardly a country into which the sect has not crept. 3. Because all others render themselves detestable by their blasphemies; but this has a great appearance of godliness, they living a righteous life before men, believing right concerning God, confessing all the articles of the creed, only hating the pope of Rome," &c. &c.

of life. You find them always employed; either learning or teaching. They are concise and devout in their prayers; blaming an unanimated prolixity. They never swear; speak little; and in their public preaching they lay the chief stress on charity. They never mind canonical hours, because, they say, that a Paternoster or two, repeated with devotion, is better than tedious hours spent without devotion. They explain the Scriptures in a different way from the holy doctors and church of Rome. They speak little, and humbly, and are well behaved in appearance."

This abstract is not produced as a proof of the candour of a Roman Catholic, but of his wretched standard of virtue and holiness. For these excellencies of character in the followers of Wickliff, are not here mentioned by the author in terms of approbation, but, on the contrary, are with great simplicity noted by him, as the distinguishing marks of a heretical people. So little, in the times of Wickliff and his followers, had the prevailing religion to do with morals and with the heart.

Though this and many other similar testimonies, which might be adduced, from popish authors, in proof of the innocence and virtues of the heretics, may satisfy us, that by no means all the persecutors of the godly were deceivers and hypocrites, in the gross sense of those terms, yet we must remember, as indeed has already been intimated, that the distinctions we would establish, still only serve to show that the sufferings of the righteous, during the period we are reviewing, are, probably, to be ascribed to very different degrees of guilt and wickedness in the hearts of those who inflicted those sufferings. Far be it from us to pretend to exculpate, in the smallest degree, the perpetrators of any of the various and horrid crimes related in this chapter. Rather let St. Peter's example direct our judgments. That Apostle thought it right to suggest to the Jews, that their case would have been worse, if what they did, had not been done in ignorance; yet he in nowise excuses them; he tells them plainly, that they had denied the Holy One, and killed the Prince of Life, and had preferred a murderer to him*; and in the preceding chapter, he directly accuses

* Acts iii. 14, 15.

them of having taken Jesus of Nazareth ; and, by WICKED HANDS, crucified and slain him."

It may be worth while to notice some other things affirmed by the aforesaid popish writer, in his account of the heretics. He says, they are great enemies to the clergy : they despise and set the Church of Rome at nought. They confound truth and falsehood, to deceive the people. They exasperate the people against those who are not of their party. That indulgences are of no use but to get money, and that it is no sin to thrash a priest or a clergyman*.

Our Saviour's remarkable prediction † naturally occurs on this occasion. For, even on the supposition that it ought to be taken literally, and not extended to all succeeding ages of the Church, it most decidedly proves, that persons may be persecutors "UNTO BLOOD," without being gross hypocrites. "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service." And here it deserves to be noted, that, though it is said these murderers would think they were doing God service, in killing his faithful servants, yet not one word is added in extenuation of their crimes. For aught we know, therefore, such men might be in a state of judicial hardness and impenitence of heart, on account of long continued habits of sin, and long opposition to light and truth. After all the candid concessions and reasonable conjectures that can be made, respecting the MEASURE of the wickedness of the various papal persecutions, it must be owned, both that the subject is difficult, and also, that WE have not much to do with it. When we are wearied and astonished with the contemplation of the barbarous and bloody scenes of this century, one of the most profitable and most certain conclusions we can arrive at, is, that the human "heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

* See M. Von der Hardt, vol. iii.

† John xvi. 2.

CHAP. II.

THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE; INCLUDING THE CASES OF
JOHN HUSS, AND JEROM OF PRAGUE.

THIS celebrated council did not make any essential reformation in religion : on the contrary, they persecuted men who truly feared God ; and they tolerated all the predominant corruptions. Their labours, therefore, do not deserve to be recorded, on account of the piety and virtue of those who composed the council. Yet the transactions at Constance claim considerable attention in these memoirs. They tend to throw light on the state of religion at that time ; they also serve to illustrate the character of John Huss and of Jerom ; and they afford various instructive reflections to those who love to attend to the dispensations of Divine Providence, and would understand the comparative power of nature and of grace, of mere human resources, and of the operations of the Holy Spirit.

The council met in the year 1414. Its objects were various and of high importance*. The necessity of the times had called aloud for an assembly of this kind. Ecclesiastical corruptions had increased to an intolerable magnitude ; and Christendom had been distracted, nearly forty years, by a schism in the popedom. To settle this dispute, and restore peace to the church, was the most urgent concern of the council. Three pretenders to the chair of St. Peter, severally, laid claim to infallibility. The very nature of their struggle was subversive of the authority to which each of them made pretensions ; and, “ of their vain contest there seemed no end.” The princes, statesmen, and rulers of the church, in those times, wanted not discernment to see the danger to which the whole ecclesiastical system was exposed by these contentions ; but it seems never to have come into the minds of them, or of any of the members of the council, to examine the foundation on which the popedom itself was erected. THAT, on all sides, was looked on as

* L'Enfant's History of the Council of Constance.—It is foreign to my design to follow this author through the details of his very accurate and circumstantial narration. The affairs, however, of John Huss and of Jerom, deserve a minute attention.

sacred and inviolable, though allowed to be burdened and incumbered with innumerable abuses.

However, they deposed the three existing popes, and chose a fresh successor of St. Peter, Martin V.; and we are to remark a providential benefit, which arose from the accomplishment of this first object of the council; namely, that while THEY had their eye only on the restoration of the unity of the Roman see, they were led to decree the superiority of councils over popes. Thus a deep wound was given to the tyrannical hierarchy, which proved of considerable service to those real Reformers, who arose about a hundred years after the council of Constance.

The three
Popes were
deposed, &
Martin V.
was elected
Pope.

I say real Reformers; for I cannot give this venerable name to the members of that assembly. That there needed a reformation of the Church in all its component parts, and that church-discipline ought to be re-established, these were ideas, indeed, which lay within their competence; and the members of this council universally confessed, that reformation and discipline ought to be prosecuted with vigour. But they brought not to the council the materials, which only could qualify them for such a work. In general, the best individuals among them were merely moralists; had some "zeal for God, but not according to knowledge;" and knew no higher principles than the voice of natural conscience, the dictates of common sense, and some information concerning the preceptive part of Christianity. Their system of religion was letter, not spirit; law, not gospel. They had some degree of insight into the distemper of human nature, little or none into the remedy. To promote the recovery of depraved mankind, they knew no methods but those of moral suasion, upon principles merely natural. The original depravity of man, salvation through the atonement of a Redeemer, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, were doctrines, the use and efficacy of which they did not understand: yet, these are the only effectual instruments for the reformation either of a corrupted church, or of a corrupted individual, though they are, by the world, generally suspected to be productive of enthusiasm, and are also too often professed by men of counterfeit religion.

A hundred years after the council of Constance, a reformation was attempted, and carried on with permanent success, by men furnished with truly evangelical views and materials. But the members of this celebrated council undertook to make "brick without straw;" and their projects of reform served only, in the event, to teach posterity, that the real doctrines of the Gospel ought to be distinctly known, cordially relished, and powerfully experienced, by those who undertake to enlighten mankind; and that without this apparatus, the efforts of the wisest and most dignified personages in Europe, for such were those assembled at Constance, will evaporate in the smoke of fair words and speeches, and of promising, but inefficient and unsubstantial schemes.

A moment's attentive consideration may convince us that this must unavoidably be the case. How could it be expected in the instance before us, that popes and cardinals, bishops and clergy, would enact, and, what is still more, would execute, laws, which bore hard on their own pride, their sloth, and their love of gain? Or, that the laity, noble or vulgar, would submit to strict rules of church-discipline? Nothing but the principle of divine love in the heart could effect these things; and divine love is learnt only in the school of Christ, and under the fostering influence of Scripture doctrine, connected with spiritual discernment*. I need not put the reader in mind, how ignorant in general, in regard to these things, men were in the fifteenth century. And hence we are no more to wonder at the failure of the attempts of the council of Constance, than at the inefficacy of the complaints, made from age to age, of the wickedness of men, both by philosophers of old, and by nominal Christians in our own times, while those, who complain and even endeavour to effect reforms, are destitute of real christian perceptions, and regard no other light than that of mere nature. Thus the institution of mere laws, however good, "can never give life †;" "the motions of sin by the law work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death ‡." If even the best characters, among the prodigious congregation at Constance, thus failed, through ignorance of the true

* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

† Gal. iii.

‡ Rom. vii.

method of relieving human evils, we need not be surprised, that those who were actuated by bad motives, should contribute nothing towards a real reformation. The consequence was, that the prevailing abuses remained in the church in full force. The council managed to restore unity to the popedom, which was indeed a very difficult point; but they found it more easy to procure consent to the deposition of wicked popes, than to compel the clergy to divest themselves of that avarice, ambition, and sensuality, which were the grand sources of the existing ecclesiastical disorders*. However, THAT which men attempted in vain by methods merely human, God himself, about a century afterwards, effected, by the foolishness of preaching†, and by his own Spirit of grace.

It was proposed, that the bishops and other pastors should be compelled to reside in their cathedrals and parishes, to visit their flocks, to renounce pluralities, and to preach the word of God themselves, instead of committing that charge to ignorant or profane priests. Amendments truly just and laudable! But those who proposed these excellent things, were themselves in a high degree proper objects of censure. Some of the orators of the council declared, that “they strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel.” In fact, several little punctilios were reformed; but, as we have just observed, all the substantial evils remained in the church.

There can be no doubt but they ought to have begun with christian doctrine itself, and its influence on the heart, if they had expected success.

The knights of the Teutonic order, at this time, ranged through all their own neighbourhood with fire and sword, under the pretence of converting infidels, and had been justly complained of by the king of Poland; yet this council supported them in their enormities; nor would they even condemn a libel written by a monk, who had exhorted all Christians to murder that monarch, and to massacre the Poles. John Petit, a friar, had publicly vindicated the assassination committed by the duke of Burgundy's order on the duke of Orleans, brother to the king of France. It may seem incredible, but it is true,

* L'Enfant.

† 1 Cor. i.

that the king of France, who prosecuted this friar before the council of Constance, could not procure his condemnation. All the dignified orders in Europe, there assembled together, had not sufficient spirit and integrity to punish crimes of the most atrocious nature. Yet they could burn without mercy those whom they deemed heretics, though men of real godliness. This part of the conduct of the assembly particularly deserves our attention ; and still more so, if we keep constantly in mind who the members were that composed it. Italy, France, Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, England, Denmark, Sweden, were represented by deputies : Four electors were present, namely, those of Mentz and Saxony, the elector Palatine, and the burgrave of Nuremberg, who there received the electoral cap ; besides envoys from the other electors : The emperor Sigismund was never absent, unless employed in the express business of the council : Many other German princes were present, besides the clergy, among whom were twenty archbishops, nearly one hundred and fifty bishops, about one hundred and fifty other dignitaries, and more than two hundred doctors.

After this general review, it may now be proper to lay before the reader a connected view of the proceedings of this council, chiefly in regard to those subjects which relate to the concerns of the real Church of Christ.

At the opening of the council of Constance, pope John XXIII. and the emperor Sigismund, were at the head of it ; and they continually endeavoured to baffle the views of each other. The former was by far the most powerful of the three popes, who at that time struggled for the chair of St. Peter ; but his character was infamous in the extreme : and Sigismund, while he pretended to acknowledge the authority of John, had formed a secret resolution to oblige him to renounce the pontificate. This same Sigismund was remarkable for hypocrisy and dissimulation : political artifices, however, were multiplied by both these potentates, and by many others connected with the council. But what has the Church of Christ to do with the intrigues of politicians ? These were the men who undertook to punish heretics and to reform the church.

John XXIII. secretly designed to leave the council as soon as possible ; particularly if their pulse did not beat in his favour. His conscience suggested to him, that an inquiry into his own conduct would terminate in his disgrace; and the very situation of Constance, an imperial city, in the circle of Suabia, exposed him too much to the machinations of the emperor. As he had, however, in a council at Rome, already condemned the opinions of John Huss, he was determined to confirm that judgment at Constance, and in that way to signalize his zeal for what was then called the Church.

John Huss had been summoned to the council, to answer for himself, though already excommunicated at Rome. He obtained, however, a safe conduct* from the emperor, who, in conjunction with his brother Wenceslaus, king of Bohemia, had committed him to the care of several Bohemian lords, particularly of John de Chlum. These travelled with him to Constance, where they arrived six days after the pope.

John Huss was born in Bohemia in 1373. He was of mean parentage, but was raised to eminence by his superior genius and industry. All the authors of that time acknowledge, that he was a man of capacity and eloquence, and highly esteemed for the probity and decency of his manners. This is the testimony of the famous Æneas Sylvius, afterwards pope of Rome. But the letters of Huss written from Constance, which he specially requested might never be published, afford a still more striking attestation to his character. He was appointed rector of the university of Prague, which was then in a very flourishing state. His character was no less eminent in the church than in the academy. He was nominated preacher of Bethlehem in the year 1400; and was in the same year made confessor to Sophia of Bavaria, the wife of Wenceslaus, king of Bohemia, a princess who highly esteemed John Huss, and was a personage of great merit: how far she was affected by the doctrine which he preached, it is not easy to ascertain;

* A safe conduct here means an engagement in writing that he should be allowed to pass and repass without molestation. The very words of it were, "omni prorsus impedimento remoto, stare, morari, & REDIRE, liberè permittatis sibi & suis."

but there is no doubt that, after his condemnation, she was obliged, by the order of the emperor Sigismund, to retire to Presburg.

In 1405 Huss preached in the chapel of Bethlehem with great celebrity. Some of Wickliff's works had been brought into Bohemia by a Bohemian gentleman, named Faulfisch, when he returned from Oxford. Hence, and probably by other modes

Huss preaches
at Prague in
A.D. 1405.

of conveyance, the evangelical views of the English reformer were introduced into that country. It is not easy to determine the point of time, when John Huss received a favourable impression of the works of Wickliff. At first he is said to have held them in detestation. The effect of prejudice indeed on a serious mind, against a person who has been condemned for heresy, was not easily to be overcome; and it is not impossible, but that Luther's account of his own first reception of the works of Huss might resemble the celebrated Bohemian's reception of the works of Wickliff.

Luther's account of the
Writings of
Huss.

“When I studied at Erford,” says that truly great man, “I found in the library of the convent, a book entitled, ‘The Sermons of John Huss.’ I was anxious to know the doctrines of that arch-heretic. My astonishment in the reading of them was incredible. What, thought I, could move the council to burn so great a man, so able and judicious an expositor of Scripture! But then the name of Huss was held in abomination: if I mentioned him with honour, I imagined the sky would fall, and the sun be darkened; I therefore shut the book with indignation. But I comforted myself with the thought, that perhaps he had written this before he fell into heresy!” Such were the juvenile reflections of that renowned reformer.

But it is not in the power of prejudice to prevent the progress of the Divine counsels, and the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart. Notwithstanding the opposition of prejudice, habit, and natural corruptions, Huss was gradually convinced of the power and excellency of evangelical doctrine. It was not necessary that he should see all things in the same light as other reformers; but there are certain truths, in which all, who are taught of God, in every age, do and must agree; and certain points

of experience also in religion, in which it is even impossible for them to differ. The doctrinal knowledge of the Bohemian reformer was indeed always very limited and defective; but the little fundamental light which, through grace, he attained, was directed to the best practical purposes. He preached loudly against the abuses of the Romish church; and particularly against the impostures of false miracles, which then abounded. And about the same year, 1405, he also preached in a synod at Prague, in the archbishop's presence, with amazing freedom against the vices of the clergy.

It was impossible, that a man who rendered himself so obnoxious to the hierarchy, should escape the aspersions of calumny: accordingly we find, that in the latter part of the year 1408, and the beginning of 1409, a clamour was raised against him on the following occasion*. Gregory XII. one of the three popes, whose schism gave rise to the council of Constance, was received by Bohemia. But when measures were proposed for calling a general council to compose the schism, Huss engaged the university to support those measures, and exhorted all Bohemia to the same purpose. The archbishop of Prague, who was attached to Gregory, opposed Huss, called him a schismatic, and forbade him to exercise the pastoral functions in his diocese. About the same time, on occasion of a dispute between the natives and the foreigners who belonged to the university, Huss having supported the former, and gained his point, the Germans in disgust retired from Prague. This circumstance enabled the Bohemian teacher to speak more publicly according to the views of Wickliff. The archbishop of Prague committed the books of the latter to the flames in 1410. But the progress of his opinions was rather accelerated than retarded by this step.

Wickliff's
books burnt
at Prague, in
A.D. 1410.

The troubles of John Huss were now multiplied. He was excommunicated at Rome. He had sent his proctors thither, to answer for him: but they were committed to prison†, after having remained there to no purpose a year and a half. Huss, after his excommunication, had no other remedy, but to appeal to Almighty God in very

* Page 29, L'Enfant.

† Id. page 33.

solemn terms. In his appeal, which was charged on him as a crime, among many other things, he says, "Almighty God, the one only essence in three persons, is the first and last refuge of those who are oppressed. Our Lord Jesus Christ, very God and very man, being desirous to redeem, from eternal damnation, his children, elected before the foundation of the world, has given, by suffering a bloody and ignominious death, this excellent example to his disciples, to commit their cause to the judgment of God." He continued still to preach on subjects, which he deemed seasonable and useful. In one sermon he treated of the uses of the commemoration of the saints, among which, he reckons meditation on the misery of man, subject to death for sin; and on the death which Jesus Christ suffered for our sin. In this same sermon, while he zealously opposes the abuses of the times, he discovers that he himself was not yet entirely clear of the popish notion of purgatory. "In praying devoutly for the dead," says he, "we procure relief to the saints in purgatory." It is sufficiently plain, however, that he could not lay much stress on the prayers of the living for the dead; for he also says expressly, "that there is no mention of such a practice in the Holy Scriptures: and, that neither the prophets nor Jesus Christ, nor his apostles, nor the saints that followed close after, taught prayer for the dead." "I very believe," continues Huss, "this custom was introduced by the avarice of priests, who don't trouble themselves to exhort the people to live well, as did the prophets, Jesus Christ and the apostles; but take great care to exhort them to make rich offerings, in hopes of happiness and a speedy delivery from purgatory."

At length John Huss was forbidden to preach at Prague any more. All that he could then do was to instruct his

Huss forbidden to preach at Prague.

countrymen by writings. Being summoned, as we have seen, to Constance, he obeyed; and before his departure, offered to give an account of his faith in the presence of a provincial synod at Prague, but was not able to obtain an audience. In this and some other particulars, he appears to have acted with great frankness and sincerity; and, though his mind strongly foreboded that which happened in the issue, his

resolution to appear at the general council was constant and unmoved. By a letter*, which he wrote to a friend, immediately before he left Prague, he entreats him, on the outside of it, not to open the letter, till he should have had certain news of his death. And among other things, he says, "You know, wo is me!—before my priesthood I freely and frequently played at chess, neglected my time, and often unhappily provoked others and myself into blamable heat of temper by that game." About the same time he wrote a letter to his flock, in terms which showed how much their spiritual advantage lay at his heart. He exhorted them to steadfastness in the doctrine which he had taught them; prayed for grace that he himself might persevere, and not betray the Gospel by cowardice; and he begged them also to pray, that he might either glorify God by martyrdom, or return to Prague with an unblemished conscience, and with more vigour than ever to extirpate the doctrine of antichrist. He expressed himself to be very uncertain of the event; but spake like one resigned to the Divine will, and joyful to die for the cause of Christ. In the course of his journey to Constance, he acted the same open part, and every where declared his readiness to be heard by all mankind. Such was the character and conduct of Huss, who, as we have seen, arrived at Constance six days after the pontiff John XXIII.

On the succeeding day, he gave notice of his arrival to the pope, through his friend John de Chlum, who at the same time implored for him the protection of his holiness. This pope himself was then in much fear on his own account, and it behoved him not, in his present circumstances, to exercise the fulness of papal domination. He therefore answered courteously; declared that he would use all his power to prevent any injustice † being done to him while at Constance; and he took off his excommunication.

John Huss appears to have expected that he should have been allowed to preach before the council; for he had prepared for that purpose, sermons, which are inserted among his works.

In the first of these he professed his Christian creed.

* L'Enfant, p. 40.

† Id. p. 43.

He declares his reliance on the word of God, which, he observes, is the true rule, and sufficient for salvation. He declares his veneration also for fathers and councils, so far as they are conformable to Scripture. “Faith,” he adds, “is the foundation of all virtues. Every man must be a disciple either of God or of Satan. Faith is the rudiment of one of these schools, infidelity of the other. A man must believe in God alone, not in the Virgin, not in the saints, not in the church, not in the pope : for none of these are God.” He distinguishes faith into three kinds. 1. To receive a position, but with some doubt, he apprehends to be the faith which we give to mere men, who yet are fallible. 2. To adhere without any doubt to the sentiments of holy doctors : still this is only to treat their sentiments as opinions, not as articles of faith. 3. To believe simply and purely, is the faith due to the Scriptures. This is the faith which, he apprehends, involves in it all acts of obedience and love ; the faith which no wicked man possesses ; “the wicked man is a Christian,” says he, “in NAME only, and cannot rehearse the creed without making himself a liar. The Church,” he says, “is an assembly of all the predestinated ; and consists, he thinks, of the triumphant church in heaven, the militant church on earth, and the sleeping church,” pitiable blindness ! “who are now suffering in purgatory.” He allows the intercession of the Virgin Mary and of other saints ; and, in favour of this popish tenet, he speaks far more forcibly, than might have been expected from one who had so unlimited a veneration for the Holy Scriptures.

If Huss had been allowed to preach this, and his other sermon which treats of peace and unity, the injustice of his condemnation must have appeared evident to all mankind, and the council would have been covered with disgrace and ignominy. For there was something very peculiar in his case ; he may justly be said to have been a martyr for holy practice itself. He does not seem to have held any one doctrine which at that day was called heretical. The superstitious notions of the times were, in general, parts of his creed : and, as far as a judgment can now be formed, he was not possessed of more light than was absolutely necessary to constitute the character

of a genuine Christian. On this account, the wickedness of his enemies was more palpably evident. The world hated him, because he was not of the world, and because he testified of it, that its works were evil. In what then did the peculiarities of his doctrine consist? The little specimen which has been given, of his creed, explains this matter. He held the faith of God's elect, a divine ^{Huss's idea of a lively faith,} faith necessarily productive of love and obedience, distinct in its whole kind from the mere human faith of wicked men. With them, faith has nothing in its nature that draws a man to God in confidence and affection; with them, the term, "vicious believer," appears not to be a solecism in language; and indeed, it may generally be observed, that godly men in all ages, even those men whose evangelical knowledge, like that of Huss, is extremely imperfect, always distinguish between a dead and a living faith; and that their views of this distinction are the consequences of the work of the Holy Spirit on their own hearts. They have known, in common with the rest of mankind, what a formal assent to Christianity means; they have known also, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, what a lively faith means: the former is merely human, has a dead uniformity, or an unanimated sameness: the latter has life and power; is productive of spiritual exercises and actions; is capable of great varieties, augmentations, declensions, and intervals; and is felt to be not of man, but of God. It is the distinctive mark of a child of God, THAT HE IS IN POSSESSION OF THIS LIVELY FAITH; and this, no doubt, was the spark of Divine Fire, which inflamed the heart of the Bohemian martyr; and which was there preserved alive amidst the contagion of superstition, the temptations of the world, and the menaces of insolent and tyrannical domination*.

Those who look only at the surface of religion, might be tempted to think, that the council in general was influenced by the Spirit of God. In all their public sessions they sang an anthem, and then they prayed kneeling†.

* I have here described what the faith of the Gospel implies and produces, rather than in what it specifically consists. This has been done on former occasions, and may be done again in the course of this History, when we are reviewing characters who understood evangelical truth much better than Huss did.

† L'Enfant, p. 50.

After having remained some time in this posture, a deacon called out to them to rise; and the president, with a loud voice, addressed himself to the Holy Ghost in a collect, which, in very solemn and explicit terms, supplicated his effectual influence, that, notwithstanding the enormity of their sins, which filled them with dread, he would deign to descend into their hearts, to direct them, to dictate their decrees, and to execute them himself, and also to preserve their minds from corrupt passions, and not suffer them, through ignorance or selfishness, to swerve from justice and truth. The ideas, and perhaps the very words, of the prayer were taken from better times, when the operations of the Holy Ghost were not only professed, but FELT in Christian assemblies. The formalities of true religion often remain a long time, after the spirit of it has been almost extinguished. It is not easy to say how much wickedness may be united with religious formalities. The rulers and great men of the Jewish nation, in the time of Christ, were remarkable examples of the hypocrisy here alluded to; and those who are acquainted with the history of their flagitious conduct, will not be surprised to hear of similar instances. Both the emperor Sigismund and his consort Barba attended the religious ceremonies of this council, and both were infamous for lewdness*.

Sigismund in a deacon's habit read the Gospel, while the pope celebrated mass!

Huss was soon deprived of his liberty, in the following manner. He was accused by Paletz, professor of divinity

Huss im-
prisoned.

at Prague, and by Causis, a pastor of one of the parishes of the same city. These men caused bills to be posted up against him in Constance, as an excommunicated heretic. When Huss complained, the pope replied, "What can I do in the case? your own countrymen † have done it." The bishops of Augsburg and of Trent were directed to summon him to appear before John XXIII. "I had expected," said Huss, "to give an account of myself before the general council, and not before the pope and his cardinals; however, I am willing to lay down my life, rather than to betray the truth." He set out

* Æneas Sylvius, Hist.

† Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? thine own nation, and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me. John xviii. 35.

therefore without delay, accompanied by his generous friend John de Chlum. On his arrival at the pope's palace, he was committed to prison. Chlum made loud complaints to the pope, but in vain. Eight articles were exhibited against Huss by Causis, and the pope appointed commissioners to try him. The vexations and insults to which he was exposed, were endless : And there was this peculiar injustice practised against him, that he was accused of being more inimical to the doctrines of the Church of Rome, than he really was. Whatever Wickliff maintained, Huss was accused of maintaining : Nor were his own express declarations respected, particularly in regard to transubstantiation, a doctrine, which he certainly believed, and on which he wrote his thoughts while under confinement at Constance. Such however was the strength of mind with which he was endowed, that during the same period, he wrote also several tracts on subjects of practical godliness, which were sent to Prague by friends whom he had at Constance. With great clearness he vindicated himself against the charge of heresy ; but, his holy life was unpardonable in the eyes of his enemies : moreover, all those whom the faithfulness of his pastoral services in Bohemia had provoked, now found an opportunity to wreak their vengeance upon him.

The generous count de Chlum, grieved and incensed at the imprisonment of Huss, wrote to Sigismund on this subject. That prince immediately sent express orders to his ambassadors, to cause him to be set at liberty, and even to break the gates of the prison in case of resistance. We naturally expect to hear, in the next place, of the prisoner's enlargement ; for, independently of this application of count de Chlum, the honour of Sigismund himself, who had positively promised a safe conduct to Huss, seemed to require it. But notwithstanding all this, the unfortunate Bohemian teacher was not released ! The crooked arts and intrigues both of the pope and of the emperor, were too powerful for the sincerity and open dealings of Huss : and, he soon found, that to commit himself to Him that judgeth righteously, was his only expedient. In the mean time, the doctors, in their preachings, exclaimed most pathetically against the prevailing

Efforts of
the count
de Chlum.

evils and abuses, and exhorted the council to reform the Church with vigour. Its growing corruptions and enormities were by them exposed in the strongest colours. Wickliff himself, or Huss, could scarcely have spoken in a more pointed or in a severer manner. But these INNOVATORS, we find, were not permitted to censure, with impunity, even the most shameful practices. The explanation is, THEIR attachment to the See of Rome itself was doubted; whereas the divines just mentioned, preached by order of their superiors, and constantly took particular care, in the midst of their keenest animadversions, to express an unequivocal respect to the popedom in general.

In the beginning of the year 1415, the commissioners for examining Huss, found themselves impeded by the emperor's grant of a safe conduct; and they scrupled not at once to entreat that prince to violate his most solemn engagement. To be brief; Sigismund was at length persuaded, that his conscience ought not to be burdened in this matter; but that he was excused from keeping faith with a man accused of heresy; and that to acquiesce in the desires of the venerable council, was the proper line of conduct for an obedient and "good son of the Church*." Such was the language of the Romanists. A direct breach of faith is, however, so strong a violation of the law WRITTEN IN THE HEART of man, that it was not easy even for the most able defender of a bad cause, to vindicate actions of this kind. Laboured apologies have been published, to soften the transactions before us †. But to what purpose is it to multiply words, in order to misrepresent a plain fact, which may be told in very few lines? The authority of Sigismund extended over the empire; HE, by virtue of that authority, REQUIRED ALL HIS SUBJECTS TO SUFFER HUSS TO PASS AND REPASS SECURE; AND, FOR THE HONOUR OF HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY, IF NEED BE, TO PROVIDE HIM WITH GOOD PASSPORTS ‡. Constance was an imperial city: from this

* Naucerus. † Maimburg's Hist. of the Western Schism, Part II.—Varilla's Hist. of Wickliff, Part. I.

‡ L'Enfant, p. 61. See the words in Latin, p. 331, the note.

city he was NOT ALLOWED to repass, but was detained in prison, till he was unjustly burnt by the order of the council. Was this for the honour of his imperial majesty?

The perfidious character of Sigismund indeed was well known. It appears from one of the letters of John Huss, that, before his departure, he had been told by some persons, that the emperor would betray him. But this servant of God, in honour of his master, ventured every thing for the cause of divine truth.

Before the death of their countryman, the Bohemian nobility, enraged at the perfidy of Sigismund, repeatedly remonstrated, by letters, against his proceedings: but all to no purpose. At the solicitation of Remonstrance of the Bohemians. Paletz, Huss was confined in the Dominican convent, where he became dangerously sick, through the bad air and other inconveniencies of a noisome dungeon.

But suffering is not the PECULIAR lot of godly men: wickedness has, also, its hardships and its inconveniencies. That same John XXIII. who had most unrighteously persecuted Huss, gradually found himself in so disagreeable a situation at Constance, partly from the accusations of his enemies, to the justice of which his own conscience could not but assent, and partly from the intrigues and manœuvres of Sigismund and the majority of the council, that he determined to depart, in secret, from the assembly. Four nations were represented at Constance, namely, the Italians, the Germans, the French, and the English. The last of these had proposed even to arrest the pope; and, though this proposal did not take effect, there seemed a general agreement in the four nations to oblige him to resign his authority. The other two anti-popes, Benedict XIII. who was chiefly owned in Spain, and Gregory XII. who had some partisans in Italy, were also pressed to resign; but, like John XXIII. they were determined to preserve the shadow of power as long as possible. The three popes seemed to vie with one another in equivocation, artifice and disingenuity. However, Benedict and Gregory were not present at Constance, but sent thither their respective legates, during the sessions. At this moment, when the council seemed not a little embarrassed what course they should take, William

Fillastre, a cardinal and a French divine, composed a memorial, which was highly acceptable both to the emperor and to the nations. He even advanced a sentiment, which, at last, very much prevailed in the assembly, and was actually reduced to practice ; namely, that a “ general council was authorized to depose even a lawful pope*.” This, as we have already observed, was the most beneficial effect of the council of Constance. The wisdom of Divine Providence weakened the strength of Antichrist by the measures of a council, which, in the main, was destitute both of piety and probity !

It is a remarkable instance of the love of power, in men who have been habituated to it, that John XXIII. even in the decline of his authority, was glad to signalize the relics of his pontificate by the canonization of Bridget, a Swedish woman, which took place in this same year 1415.

Canonization
of a Swedish
woman, in
A. D. 1415.

After numberless intrigues, in which the pope and the emperor seemed to strive which should exceed the other in dissimulation, the former fled from the council to Schaffhausen ; whence he wrote to the emperor a letter couched in the most respectful terms. Schaffhausen, it should be observed, was a city belonging to Frederic, duke of Austria, who had promised to defend pope John.

By this step, the designs of those who really intended to put an end to the schism, seemed to be quashed entirely. Among these was the emperor himself, in whose conduct, scandalous and hypocritical as it was in the extreme, one object is yet plainly discernible, a sincere desire of restoring the unity of the hierarchy. He assured the council, on the day after the departure of pope John, that he would defend their authority to the last drop of his blood. He observed, that there were many Antichrists in the world, who sought their own interest, not that of Jesus Christ : He inveighed against the conduct of John ; he exposed his tyranny, simony, chicanery, and insincerity, and exhorted them to judge him according to his deserts. Thus, while the members of this assembly agreed in persecuting the Church of God, and still detained in prison the excellent John Huss, they were in-

Declaration
of Sigismund.

volved in extreme difficulties, and scarcely knew how to support the system of idolatry, and secular formality of religion, to which they were in general attached. The doctrine of the superiority of a council, started by Filastre, was, however, maintained and pressed at this time in an elaborate discourse of John Gerson, chancellor of the university of Paris, who was looked upon as the soul of the assembly, and who, in fact, was one of the greatest men in that age, in erudition and knowledge. He admits the pope to be Christ's vicar on earth; but asserts that his power is limited, and ought to be restrained by certain rules and laws for the edification of the Church, to which the authority of the pope, and all other persons ought to be devoted. Gerson seems to have disregarded the authority of Scripture, which knows nothing of such a vicar of Christ: common sense, however, and the experience of the necessity of some restrictions of the papal power, appear to have suggested to this great man several salutary arguments and propositions. Nor is this the only instance in which we may see, that even mere natural principles, without the aid of revelation, can proceed to a CERTAIN LENGTH in correcting the enormous abuses of a corrupt church.

While the imperial and papal parties were thus contending, the commissioners endeavoured to oblige John Huss to retract; but in vain. Though infirm, ^{Firmness of Huss.} and harassed, during his confinement in prison, with a variety of vexations, he answered to every particular inquiry and objection; at the same time, always desiring to be heard by the council itself. The pope's officers hitherto guarded him; but these being gone to their master, he was delivered to the bishop of Constance: and was afterwards carried to the fortress of Gottleben. In his letters to his friends, he commends the pope's officers, for their gentle treatment, and expresses his fears of worse usage in his new circumstances.

It was one of those remarkable instances of the conduct of Divine Providence, with which the history of the council of Constance abounds, that John XXIII. himself, the unrighteous persecutor of Huss, was soon after brought as a prisoner to the same castle of Gottleben, and lodged

in the same place with the victim of his cruelty. For Sigismund, determined to support the authority of the council, took such measures as effectually quashed the power of Frederic, duke of Austria, reduced him to surrender at discretion, and obliged him to abandon the cause of the pope. Whence this pontiff, who at first had presided at the council, after having been driven to the necessity of fleeing from place to place, was at length confined at Gottleben, which was within half a league from Constance. Seldom has there been a case, which more remarkably showed, that, in external things, the same events often attend the righteous and the wicked. The real difference of condition between the pope and the martyr was INTERNAL, and ought to be measured by the different frame of their MINDS. The one was harassed with all the pangs of disappointed ambition, and had neither the knowledge nor the disposition to console himself with the DIVINE PROMISES ; the latter “ in patience possessed his spirit, and rejoiced in hope of the glory of God.”

John XXIII. was, at length, solemnly deposed, and was also rendered incapable of being re-elected. The same Deposition of sentence was issued against Benedict XIII. and John XXIII. Gregory XII. The conduct of these three men, particularly of the first, had been so infamous, that all the world applauded these determinations of the council. In general, the members of this assembly were influenced by superstitious, selfish, worldly motives ; but this decision is among the very few important instances in which they merit commendation.

While, contrary to every principle of justice, honour, and humanity, the Bohemian reformer was still detained in confinement, and still in vain solicited a fair hearing of his cause, there was exhibited at this council another striking example of the same spirit of persecution.

Jerom of Prague arrived at Constance. He was a master of arts ; but had neither the clerical nor the monastic character. He is universally allowed to have been a man of very superior talents. He had adhered to John Huss ; and very vigorously seconded all his endeavours to promote a reforma-

Arrival of
Jerom of
Prague.

tion in Bohemia. He had travelled into England for the sake of his studies; and had thence brought the books of Wickliff into his own country *. When Huss was setting out from Prague, Jerom had exhorted him to maintain with steadfastness the doctrines which he had preached; and had promised that he would himself go to Constance to support him, if he should hear that he was oppressed. Huss, in one of his letters, expressly desired a friend to prevent Jerom's performance of this promise, lest he should meet with the same treatment as he himself had experienced. But Jerom had the generosity to disregard the entreaties of Huss, and came directly to Constance. Hearing, however, that Huss was not allowed a fair examination, and that some secret machination was carrying on against himself, he retired to Uberlingen, whence he wrote to the emperor, to request a safe conduct. Sigismund refused to grant his petition. Upon which Jerom published a paper, declaring it to be his desire to answer any charges of heresy that could possibly be brought against him. And for the purpose of executing so laudable an intention, he begged, in the name of God, to have a safe conduct granted to him. "If," says he, "I am put in prison, and violence is used against me before I am convicted, the council will manifest to the whole world their injustice by such a proceeding." The publication of this writing produced no satisfactory answer; and Jerom finding it impossible to be of any service to his friend Huss, resolved to return to his own country. After his departure from Constance, he was summoned to appear before the council; and a SAFE CONDUCT OR PASSPORT was dispatched to him; which promised him, indeed, all manner of security, but it contained such a SALVO TO JUSTICE and the INTERESTS OF THE FAITH, as rendered it, in effect, a mere nullity; and as to the citation for his appearance, Jerom protested, on his first examination, that it had never reached his hands.

To omit a long detail of uninteresting particulars, this persecuted reformer was arrested at Hirsaw, on his return to Bohemia, and led in chains to Constance. Jerom imprisoned in A. D. 1415.

* Camerar. Histor. Narr.

He was immediately brought before a general congregation, which seems, on this occasion, to have assembled for the express purpose of insulting, ensnaring, and brow-beating their virtuous prisoner. A bishop questioned him concerning his precipitate flight from Uberlingen, and his non-obedience to the citation. "Because," answered Jerom, "I was not allowed a safe conduct; notwithstanding, however, if I had known of the citation, I would have returned instantly, though I had been actually on the confines of Bohemia." Upon this answer, there arose such a clamour in the assembly, that no one could be heard distinctly: every mouth opened, at once, against Jerom; and the impartial spectator saw rather the representation of the baiting of a wild beast, than of a wise assembly investigating truth, and dispensing justice. When order was restored, Gerson, who had formerly known Jerom in France, and who discovered much acrimony towards BOTH the Bohemian reformers, reproached him for having formerly given much offence to the university of Paris, by introducing several erroneous propositions. With great spirit Jerom answered, that it was hard to have opinions objected to him of so long a date; and that, moreover, the disputations of young students were never to be considered as strict disquisitions of truth. "As I was admitted master of arts," said he, "I used the liberty of discussion, allowed to philosophers; nor was I then charged with any error: I am still ready to maintain what I advanced at that time, if I am allowed; and also to retract if I be convicted of mistake."

This was not the only instance in which Jerom had occasion to show his promptitude in answering calumnies. Examination of Jerom. He was repeatedly attacked in a similar style; for a persecuted follower of Christ is looked on, by the world, as lawful game. The governors of the universities of Cologne and of Heidelberg made heavy complaints of the heresies which the prisoner had maintained in those places respectively. "You vented several errors in our university," said a doctor from Cologne. "Be pleased to name one," answered Jerom. The accuser was instantly stopped in his career, and pleaded that his memory failed him. "You advanced most im-

pious heresies among us," said a divine from Heidelberg; "I remember one particularly, concerning the Trinity. You declared, that it resembled water, snow, and ice." Jerom avowed, that he still persisted in his opinions, but was ready to retract with humility and with pleasure, when he should be convinced of an error. However, no opportunity was allowed either for explanation or defence: all was confusion and uproar: voices burst out from every quarter, "Away with him, away with him! to the fire, to the fire!"

Jerom stood astonished at the gross indecency of this scene; and as soon as he could, in any degree, be heard, he looked round the assembly with a steady and most significant countenance, and cried aloud, "Since nothing but my blood will satisfy you, I am resigned to the will of God." With sufficient adroitness, if the passage had but been quoted in support of a better cause, the archbishop of Saltzburg replied, "No, Jerom, God hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn from his way and live."

After this tumultuous examination, Jerom was delivered to the officers of the city, and immediately carried to a dungeon. Some hours afterward, Wallenrod, archbishop of Riga, caused him to be conveyed privately to St. Paul's church, where he was bound to a post, and his hands were chained to his neck. In this posture he remained ten days, and was fed with bread and water only. His friends, all this time, knew not what was become of him; till at length one of them received notice of his pitiable situation from the keeper of the prison, and procured him better nourishment. But notwithstanding this, the various hardships he had undergone, brought upon him a dangerous illness, in the course of which Jerom pressed the council to allow him a confessor. With difficulty he at length obtained his request; and, through the means of his confessor, the poor heretic procured some small mitigation of his sufferings from bonds and other cruel treatment. But he remained in prison till his execution.

Jerom confined in a dungeon.

A number of important, coincident circumstances, tending to illustrate the state of religion in those times,

have given vast celebrity to the council of Constance ; otherwise, the reader must now be convinced, that the members who composed that immense assembly, merit the description which we have already given of their general character. Many of them were learned and able ; many of them superstitious and bigoted ; and most of them worldly-minded and unprincipled, and totally ignorant of evangelical truth.

As the works of the famous Wickliff had undoubtedly laid the foundation of the religious innovations in Bohemia, they now proceeded to condemn the doctrines of that obnoxious reformer. In this point they harmonized with John XXIII. whom they had deposed and now held in custody. For this same pontiff, John XXIII. had formerly, at the desire of Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, condemned the doctrines of Wickliff*. These very doctrines, digested into forty-five articles, which had formally been pronounced heretical at Rome, were now read in the council ; and as far as appears, they were reprobated without one dissenting voice, and the author of them was pronounced a heretic.

Doctrines of
Wickliff con-
demned in
this Council.

The decrees of so violent and so iniquitous a council as that of Constance, concerning articles of faith, are of little moment. The heads of the articles, however, in the main and in substance, express the real sentiments of Wickliff, which have been already considered and reviewed. His opposition to the POPISH† doctrine of transubstantiation, was positive and unequivocal. In some particular points, his meaning seems to have been distorted, through prejudice or malice. In regard to his opinions concerning tithes and the temporal possessions of the clergy, let the reader, when he has compared the several arguments advanced by the parties, judge for himself, whether Wickliff or the council had the advantage in that controversy. After what has been stated in Chapter III. Cent. XIV. I shall make no further observations on the subject, except that the council, on this head, do not appear to have materially misrepresented Wickliff's notions.

“Tithes,” says Wickliff, “are not of divine right,

* Wilkin's Concilia, p. 350.

† It has been before observed, that on this article of faith Wickliff approached nearly to con-substantiation.

because it cannot be proved from the Gospel, that Jesus Christ either paid or ordered them to be paid." In his complaints to the king and parliament, he desired that tithes and offerings might be GIVEN, as before, to honest and able persons, not EXTORTED by force. He thinks it wrong, that the laity should be so much oppressed for the purpose of pampering the luxury of a priest, as not to be able to maintain their own families, and to relieve the poor. "As the laity only," says he, "paid tithes to be instructed in the word of God, there are many cases, in which, according to the laws of God and man, the people may refuse to pay them. However, a GOOD priest ought to have a handsome maintenance: and the appropriation of parish churches to rich monasteries is a great evil."

Even the council of Constance will deserve to be heard, when they appeal to Scripture, and give reasons to support their decrees. "The right," say they, "which the clergy have to the possession of temporalities, is established by several arguments drawn from the Holy Scriptures. The clergy under the old law possessed forty-eight cities with their suburbs. They had tithes of all the Israelites, and the first-fruits of their corn, wine, oil, &c. as well as of all things consecrated to God. Besides, if, according to St. Paul, a bishop must be given to hospitality, and a deacon must rule his house, they must have houses and substance. It appears by the book of the Acts, that the believers had possessions; and among those believers were the clergy. Jesus Christ himself had money, of which Judas was the treasurer. God orders Jeremiah to buy a field, which belonged to a Levite, who is called in Scripture Hanameel. Augustine, in an epistle to a bishop, named Boniface, observes, that what the clergy possess more than necessary, belongs to the poor."—What other practical tendency can Wickliff's doctrine on this subject have, than to stir up the laity to seize the possessions of the clergy?

Wickliff is accused also of saying, that all things happen from absolute necessity. The council use the common Arminian arguments in opposition to the English reformer, whose sentiments, however, on this subject have never been shown to be materially different from what by

far the greater part of good Christians have maintained in all ages.

If the council of Constance had studied to vindicate Wickliff's reasonings respecting the abuses of popery, and to cast an odium upon their own doctrines and proceedings, they could scarcely, it should seem, have effected their purpose by surer means, than by using certain arguments which they thought proper to bring forward in confutation of the opinions of the man whom they looked on as a most dangerous innovator. Thus; on one occasion, they boldly affirm, "That there is no salvation out of the church of Rome." A proposition of this magnitude, one would have thought, required all the proof and illustration that could be given to it. Whereas the learned council content themselves with gravely appealing to a decree of the Lateran council, and to a decretal of pope Callixtus, which establish the two following points: 1st, That the church of Rome is the mistress of all churches; and 2dly, That it is not lawful to depart from her decisions. "Hence," say they, "it clearly follows, that the pope is the immediate vicegerent of Jesus Christ, because the church of Rome has so determined. Though this or that particular pope be corrupt, the church of Rome itself can never decay." Thus do these men give the palm of truth to the man whom they condemn as an heretic. For HE appealed to the Scriptures; THEY to the church of Rome; on a subject too, in which that church is more particularly bound to adduce another sort of argument than that of her own authority.

In the same year commissioners were appointed to inquire into the disputes between the Teutonic knights and the Poles. And though nothing was decided at present in that business, it may throw some light on the state of Christendom, to give a general idea of the case. The Prussians, as A. D. 1415. we have seen, were among the last of the nations of Europe who received the forms of Christianity. Barbarous and untractable in their manners, they invaded and harassed their neighbours the Poles, who called to their assistance the Teutonic knights, the remnants of those warlike crusaders, who so long had desolated the

Disputes between the Teutonic knights and the Poles, in

East. The knights, in consideration of the succours afforded to the Poles, received from them the grant of Prussia and of some neighbouring districts; which grant was confirmed by the Roman pontiff. In this manner Prussia at length was obliged to profess itself Christian. Nor do there seem to be in history any instances of national conversions, more contrary to the genius of the Gospel, than this of the Prussians. The knights, armed with indulgences for the conversion of infidels, and with bulls for putting themselves in possession of conquered countries, gratified their military passion, while they imagined they were doing God service, and while they wasted all the neighbourhood with fire and sword, and assaulted even the Poles, their benefactors. Several pitched battles were fought between them and the king of Poland, in which they were generally defeated. Their perfidy was equal to their ambition; for though truces were made from time to time, they continually violated them, as if they had been determined with all their might to disgrace the holy religion for which they professed so much zeal. Ladislaus, king of Poland, had views more honourable to the Christian name. In a letter, which he wrote to a friend, he protested, that he could not refrain from tears before a battle, in which he foresaw the defeat of the knights, and that he entered into the engagement with much commiseration of his enemies.

The repeated violences of these fighting professors of Christianity, obliged this prince, though victorious in the field, to send ambassadors to the council of Constance. The question of law for the decision of the assembly was, whether it is right for Christians to convert infidels by force of arms, and to seize their estates: the knights maintained the affirmative, the Polish ambassadors the negative: and such was the state of religion at that time, that the authority of a council was deemed necessary to decide a case, which to us does not appear to involve the smallest difficulty. When men are heated by ambition, or blinded by prejudice and self-interest, they often forget the dictates of common sense, and the first principles of morality.

In the same year, 1415, another object of controversy

was started in the council, which was afterwards attended with important consequences, and produced one of the usual subjects of contention between the papists and the protestants ; I mean the doctrine of the communion in both kinds *.

Question concerning the Communion in both kinds, in

A. D. 1415.

John of Prague, bishop of Litomissel in Moravia, censured in the assembly the practice of the followers of Huss, who administered the wine to the laity. About twenty-five years before the council of Constance, Matthias, a curate of Prague, had ventured to preach publicly against the general disuse of the cup in the communion, and is said to have actually administered the sacrament to the laity in both kinds. It is not easy to say precisely, at what period the general disuse took place, but we have seen that it was gradually effected in the dark ages, long after the time of Gregory the first of Rome ; and that it was, most probably, a concomitant of the doctrine of transubstantiation. Matthias

Retraction of Matthias,

A. D. 1389.

was obliged to retract in a synod assembled at Prague in 1389. It is however agreeable to the general views of this history to observe, from a Bohemian writer †, that Matthias was a pastor of great piety and probity, fervently zealous for the truth of Jesus Christ and the doctrine of the Gospel, an enemy to the reigning corruptions and abuses, and one who suffered greatly for his assiduity in preaching the word of God.

Death of Matthias,

A. D. 1394.

He died in 1394. Some months after the departure of John Huss for Constance, Jacobel, a pastor of Prague, a man renowned for learning and purity of manners, revived the doctrine of Matthias. Peter of Dresden, being expelled from Saxony for maintaining the Waldensian doctrines, retired to Prague, and there instructed youth. From him Jacobel learnt that the withholding of the cup from the laity was an error ‡. Faithful to his convictions, he preached with perspicuity and with vehemence : he roused men's attention and excited their

* L'Enfant, p. 256.

† Procopius of Prague.

‡ It appears from Perrin's History of the Waldenses, p. 156, that this people rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation. According to them, "the eating of the spiritual bread is the eating of Christ's body figuratively. Otherwise, Christ must have been eaten perpetually. For we need to feed on him continually in a spiritual sense. To eat him, is to abide in him."

zeal ; and by these means a flame was kindled throughout Bohemia respecting this matter. The clergy of that kingdom complained to the council of Constance ; and the bishop of Litomissel, while he impeached Jacobel, represented the circumstance of this new controversy, as a consequence of the doctrine of John Huss, in order to hasten his condemnation.

That reformer had probably been inclined to the views of Jacobel before he left Prague ; but it was not till after he came to Constance, that he published his approbation of the communion in both kinds. The principal author, or, to speak more properly, the principal reviver of this practical truth in the Church of Christ, was Jacobel, who seems to have been a zealous, active, laborious minister of Christ. Little indeed is known of his pastoral services, because here, as in other cases, we have to lament that the accounts of vital godliness are general and short, while those of the controversies in external affairs are verbose and prolix. Let the Christian reader, however, contemplate with a lively satisfaction the providential effects of Waldensian light and knowledge in spiritual things.

The appearance of the new controversy, added to the question concerning Jerom of Prague, increased the fury of the storm against Huss ; and his enemies laboured day and night for his destruction. His health and strength were decayed by the rigour of confinement. The great men of Bohemia, repeatedly insisted on justice being done to their countryman. But justice was a stranger at Constance : the emperor himself had perfidiously given up this faithful servant of God to the malice of his enemies ; and the council, as if conscious of the difficulty of condemning him openly, had recourse to the despicable means of attempting, by repeated insults and vexations, to shake his constancy, and render a public trial unnecessary. He was frequently examined in private. An air of violence and of menace was employed on those occasions, of which we may form some idea from one of the letters of Huss. “Causis,” says he, “was there, holding a paper in his hand, and stirring up the bishop of Constantinople to oblige me to answer distinctly to each

A letter of
Huss,

article it contained. Every day he is brewing some mischief or other. God, for my sins, has permitted HIM AND PALETZ to rise up against me. Causis examines all my letters and words with the air of an inquisitor; and Paletz has written down all the conversation which we have had together for many years. I have this day suffered great vexation."

The approbation of a good conscience, and the comforting presence of the Spirit of God, appear to have supported this holy man in all his sufferings. He gave his adversaries no advantage over him either through warmth or timidity; he refused to give answers in private; he reserved himself to the public trial which he had always solicited; he retracted nothing of what he had openly preached, and he possessed his soul in patience and resignation.

The unrighteous views of the council being thus far baffled, he was conducted to Constance, lodged in the Franciscan monastery, and loaded with chains; in which condition he remained till the day of his condemnation.

His first hearing before the council was attended with so much confusion, through the intemperate rage of his enemies, that nothing could be concluded. In
The first and second hearing of Huss. the second, in which the emperor was present, for the purpose of preserving order, Huss was accused of denying the doctrine of transubstantiation. Some Englishmen, who knew what Wickliff held on that point, and who were ready to take for granted, that Huss dissented in no article from their countryman, pressed him vehemently on the subject. It appeared, however, that the Bohemian teacher followed the church of Rome on this important doctrine; and the sincerity of his creed, though a mistaken one, appears from his treatise on the Body of Christ.

A tedious dispute ensued, concerning the refusal of Huss to join with those, who condemned the errors of Wickliff. He explained himself with sufficient precision on this head: he declared, that he blamed the conduct of the archbishop Subinco at Prague, only because he had condemned Wickliff's books without examination, and without distinction; and he added, that most of the

doctors of the university of Prague found fault with that prelate, because he produced no reasons from the Scriptures. Huss further observed to the council, that, not having been able to obtain justice from John XXIII. he had appealed from him to Jesus Christ. His seriousness in mentioning this appeal, exposed him to the derision of the council. It was even doubted whether it was lawful to appeal to Jesus Christ. Huss, however, with great gravity affirmed, that it was always lawful to appeal from an inferior to a higher court; that in this case the Judge was infallible, full of equity and compassion, and one who would not refuse justice to the miserable. The levity of the assembly, and the seriousness of the prisoner, were remarkably contrasted in these proceedings. The reader will of course understand John Huss in the sense in which, no doubt, he intended to be understood. In appealing to Jesus Christ, the conscientious martyr had his own mind fixed on the last judgment, and he aimed at making an impression on the court by directing their attention to that awful tribunal.

It would be tedious and uninteresting to take notice of the variety of calumnies with which he was aspersed. One instance may deserve to be mentioned*. “You one day,” said his accusers, “advised the people to take up arms against those, who opposed your doctrine.” “I one day,” replied Huss, “while I was preaching on the christian armour, described in the sixth chapter to the Ephesians, exhorted my audience to take the sword of the Spirit, and the helmet of Salvation; but I expressly admonished them, that I meant the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and not a material sword.” Sigismund exhorted him to retract his errors, and declared, that, rather than support him in his heresy, he would with his own hands kindle the fire to burn him.

John de Chlum, however, was not to be dismayed by the power and multitude of the adversaries of Huss: he supported the insulted victim of their fury with courage and constancy. In his third hearing, Third hearing of Huss. John Huss answered the inquiries made to him concerning articles of supposed heresy, which were extracted

* L'Enfant, p. 330. Vol. I.

from his own works. He answered severally to the questions with much clearness and candour, owning, denying, or explaining, as occasions required. He was vehemently pressed to retract his errors, to own the justice of the accusations, and to submit to the decrees of the council. But neither promises nor menaces moved him. "To abjure," said he, "is to renounce an error that hath been held. But, as in many of those articles, errors are laid to my charge which I never thought of, how can I renounce them by oath? As to those articles, which I own to be mine, I will renounce them with all my heart, if any man will teach me sounder doctrines than what I have advanced." His conscientious integrity, however, availed him not. The court demanded a universal retraction; and nothing short of that could procure him their favour. The tedious malignity of the third day's examination oppressed at length both the mind and body of Huss; and the more so, because he had passed the preceding night sleepless, through pain of the tooth-ach. For some days before, he had also been afflicted with the gravel, and was, in other respects, in a weak state of health. At the close of the examination he was carried back to prison, whither John de Chlum followed him. "Oh, what a comfort," said he, "was it to me, to see that this nobleman did not disdain to stretch out his arm to a poor heretic in irons, whom all the world, as it were, had forsaken!" In the same letter in which he mentions this, he begs the prayers of his friend, because "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Such is the treatment, which the dearest and most faithful servants of God are frequently called upon to endure from an evil world. After the departure of Huss, Sigismund, with the most unrelenting barbarity, expressed himself against him, as a heretic worthy of the flames. On the next day a form of retractation was sent to this persecuted prisoner, which, though it was penned in equivocal and ambiguous terms, plainly appeared on the whole, to imply a confession of guilt. Huss therefore refused to sign it; and added, that he would rather be cast into the sea with a millstone about his neck, than give offence to his pious neighbours by acknowledging

that to be true, which they knew to be false ; that he had preached patience and constancy to others, and that he was willing to show an example of these graces, and hoped by divine assistance to be enabled to do so.

We have constantly seen, in the course of this history, that the holiness of heart and life, which real Christians have evidenced from age to age, was always connected with the peculiar doctrines of Christianity. Sometimes one of these doctrines, and sometimes another, constituted the prominent feature of their profession ; but it is in vain to look for men of real holiness and virtue, who were inimical or even indifferent to the fundamentals of the Gospel. If there were any one doctrine more particularly insisted on than another by sincere Christians, that doctrine was always, in its nature, of considerable importance ; and by just connexion it implied and involved the whole of godliness, even though that connexion might not be understood or relished in every part by all persons of true piety. Should we then be asked, what peculiar doctrine was maintained and espoused by John Huss, whose holiness and integrity were undoubtedly eminent, the answer is, it was the doctrine of the depravity of human nature, and of the necessity of a divine influence. This, I doubt not, will appear sufficiently evident to the evangelical reader, who will take the trouble fully to consider several of the articles which were objected to him, and also some extracts from his letters ; for, notwithstanding that the frequent use of the terms PREDESTINATE, CHOSEN, ELECT, &c. in those articles and extracts, might lead an uninformed and superficial reader to conclude that Huss was merely a speculative defender of the doctrine of absolute decrees, without being an advocate for a real change of heart and personal holiness, it deserves to be remarked, first, that this Reformer used the terms in question precisely in the sense in which they are used in Scripture ; and secondly, that the doctrine of the total inability of man to save himself, both from the punishment and from the dominion of sin, was the great practical point he had in view. Among the expressions, which he had used, and which were objected to him, we may mention the following :

Peculiar
doctrines of
Huss.

Articles
objected to
Huss.

“The assembly of the predestinated is the holy church, which has neither spot nor wrinkle, which Jesus Christ calls his own. A reprobate is never a member of the holy church.” These and similar passages, produced in accusation against him, he partly admitted as his own; and partly qualified by a fair and candid explanation. On the whole, it is very evident that he gave offence by studiously distinguishing those, whom God hath chosen to be his peculiar people in Christ, and are evidently pointed out, by their real practical holiness, as different from the common bulk of nominal Christians. Even the pope and his cardinals, if not predestinated*, to him appeared to be no members of the body of Christ. “The church of Christ is,” says he, from Bernard, “his own body more evidently, than the body which he delivered for us to death. The church is as it were the ‘Barnfloor†’ of the Lord, in which are the predestinate and the reprobate, the former being as wheat, and the latter as chaff.” In these subjects he followed the ideas of Augustine, with whose writings he appears to have been much acquainted. Divine influence, therefore, implying and involving all the essentials of the Gospel, according to the views of Augustine, and evidencing itself in particular persons by real humility, piety, and integrity, was one of the grand doctrinal points of John Huss; and this holy man, defective as he was in christian light, and obscured with much superstition, was yet enabled to distinguish his scriptural creed from that of the mere religion of nature, both in theory and in practice; and he accordingly underwent that cross of Christ from the persecutions of the wicked, which must ever be expected by those who will not allow merely nominal Christianity to be the real religion of Jesus. For it is well known that nothing more irritates those, who live “according to the course of this world‡,” than to be told that God has a holy peculiar people, formed for himself to show forth his praise.

The following passages are extracted from his letters:

“Almighty God will confirm the hearts of his faithful people, whom he hath chosen before the foundation of

* Rom. viii. 29.

† 2 Kings, vi. 27.

‡ Ephes. ii. 2.

the world, that they may receive the eternal crown of glory.—I am greatly comforted with those words of our Saviour, ‘Happy are ye when men shall hate you, and shall separate you from their company,’ &c. O precious consolatory lesson, difficult, indeed, not to understand, but to practise in time of tribulation. Let patience have her perfect work. It is a light matter to speak of patience, but a great matter to fulfil it. Our most patient Champion himself, who knew that he should rise again the third day, and redeem from damnation all his elect, was troubled in spirit. Yet he, though sorely troubled, said to his disciples, Let not your hearts be troubled, &c. I trust steadfastly, the Lord will make me a partaker of the crown with you, and with all them who love the Lord Jesus Christ. Merciful Christ! draw us, weak creatures, after thee; for except thou draw us, we are not able to follow thee. Give us a courageous spirit, that it may be ready; for without thee we can do nothing. Give us an upright faith, a firm hope, and perfect charity*.”

Extracts
from his
letters.

The integrity of the Bohemian martyr was severely tried by the solicitations of several persons. But divine grace had given him the virtue of sincerity to a very eminent degree, so that the very least equivocation was abominable in his eyes. Even his enemy, Paletz, inwardly reverencing his virtue, took pains to induce him to retract. “Put yourselves in my place,” said Huss; “what would you do, if you were required to retract certain errors, which you were sure you never held.” “I own, it is a hard case,” answered Paletz, with tears in his eyes. It is not improbable, that this man had never meant actually to expose his countryman to the flames: and it is extremely probable that he had never before considered the dilemma to which the spirit of persecution must reduce a person of real integrity, namely, either to perjure himself, or to be consumed in the flames. One of the doctors, who visited Huss, said to him, “If the council should tell you, that you have but one eye, though you have really two, you would be obliged to agree with the council.” “While God keeps me in my

The integrity
of Huss.

* Fox, Vol. I. p. 716.

senses," replied Huss, "I would not say such a thing against my conscience, on the entreaty or command of the whole world."

This holy personage foreseeing his end to be near, redeemed* the little time that was left to him, by writing letters, which were publicly read at Prague, in his chapel at Bethlehem, the once delightful scene of his ministry. One of these letters may be considered as a farewell sermon addressed to his flock. He entreats them to adhere solely to the word of God, and not to follow himself, if they have observed any thing in him not agreeable to it; and he particularly begs them to pardon him, where he had been guilty of any levity in discourse or behaviour. He begs them to be grateful to John de Chlum, and another nobleman, who had been faithful to him in his sufferings. He adds, that he hears no news of Jerom, except that he was a prisoner like himself, waiting for the sentence of death; and he concludes with an earnest prayer, that the Gospel of Christ may be always preached to them in his dear chapel of Bethlehem. His firmness was that of a Christian, not of a stoic; founded in humility, not in pride. He experienced some attacks of the fears of death; but soon recovered his courage. "I am far," said he, "from the strength and zeal of the apostle Peter. Jesus Christ has not given me his talents; besides I have more violent conflicts, and a greater number of shocks to sustain. I say, therefore, that placing all my confidence in Jesus Christ, I am determined, when I hear my sentence, to continue steadfast in the truth, even to the death, as the saints and you shall help me." Thus modestly does he write to a friend; and it is, from his private epistolary correspondence, that the most genuine features of his character may be drawn. John Huss appears indeed to have been one of those of whom "the world was not worthy†;" and of no mere man could it ever be said with more propriety, that the world hated him, because he testified of it, that its works were evil. Undoubtedly, his open rebukes of sin, both by his public preaching and writings, and by the uniform purity and innocence

* Ephes. v. 16.

† Heb. xi. 38.

of his manners, had inflamed the tempers of the great men of the age, both in church and state; yet, it was scarcely to be expected, that the council of Constance should, even upon their own principles, proceed, without the least proof of heresy, to condemn to the flames the most upright of men, because he refused to acknowledge that to be true, which he believed to be false; or that this same council should justify the deceit and perfidy of their Imperial President. Their conduct, therefore, is to be considered as a striking proof, not only of the general depravity of human nature, but also of the general wickedness and hypocrisy of the Roman church at that time.

The council settled beforehand after what manner he was to be treated, in case he should retract*. He was to have been degraded from the priesthood, and to be for ever shut up between four walls.

The cruel
purpose of
the council.

This was the only reward which the unfeeling tyrants had intended to bestow on him, in the event of his wounding his conscience to gratify them. To lay the whole weight of blame on the popes, on account of the enormities of the Roman church, is to view that church superficially. It was generally and systematically corrupt: It had recently deposed three popes: it was, at present, without a pope; and yet could be guilty of crimes, not less heinous than some of the worst which the popes ever committed.

The council, so Huss wrote the night before his death, exhorted him to renounce every one of the articles, which had been extracted from his books; but he absolutely refused to accede to so unreasonable a requisition, except they could, from the Scriptures, PROVE his doctrines to be erroneous, as they asserted them to be. It may be proper to have mentioned this circumstance here by way of anticipation, to obviate a misrepresentation which was studiously made concerning John Huss, as if he had PROMISED to retract. On the contrary, it appears, that he persisted to the last in the defence of his innocence with UNSHAKEN INTEGRITY.

While the council was preparing the formalities of his condemnation, they enacted a decree to forbid the recep-

* L'Enfant, p. 363, Vol. I.

Decree
against the
communion in
both kinds.

tion of the communion in both kinds; and assigned no other reason for it, except their regard to the doctrine of transubstantiation; at the same time they owned, that IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH, THIS SACRAMENT IN BOTH KINDS WAS RECEIVED BY THE BELIEVERS*. Thus the triumph of the Roman church seemed to be complete. She dared to own, that she contradicted primitive Christianity; and she dared to enact, that those, who refused to obey HER institutions, though confessedly contrary to those of the primitive Church, ought to be treated as heretics! What is this but open, undisguised, opposition to the commands of Jesus Christ? And what other name but that of Antichrist, can so well express the corrupt and presumptuous domination of the Romish hierarchy?

But there is a voice in natural conscience, which it is not in the power of Satan easily to silence. Sigismund, inwardly ashamed of his baseness and perfidy towards Huss, wished to save the life of that good man, though he saw that, according to the wicked policy of the council, this was not to be done, except the prisoner could be induced to forswear himself. Many persons, to second the views of the emperor, endeavoured to overcome the constancy of Huss; even the council sent several deputations to him for that purpose. One of this martyr's letters throws some light on these transactions †. "Paletz," says he, "attempts to persuade me, that I ought to abjure, because of the great advantage which will accrue to me from it. I told him, that to be condemned and burned was not so scandalous, as to be guilty of falsehood." He speaks thus of his other accuser, Causis: "That poor man has been often with the deputies before the prison. I heard him say to the guards, If it please God, we shall shortly burn this heretic, who has cost me so many florins in prosecuting him."

He wrote about the same time to a preacher of his acquaintance, concerning the decree of the council lately mentioned: "They have condemned the communion of the cup with regard to the laity, as an error, and have condemned of heresy every one who violates their decree,

* L'Enfant, p. 386, Vol. I.

† Ibid. p. 397.

though they have nothing but custom to oppose to an institution of Jesus Christ."

The council now ordered the works of Huss to be burnt; on occasion of which circumstance, he writes to his friends: "That he was not discouraged on this account; that Jeremiah's books met with the same treatment*; nevertheless the Jews suffered the calamities, which that faithful prophet had foretold. Consider, that they have condemned the pope, their god upon earth, for his crimes, particularly for selling indulgences, bishoprics, and the like. But in this they are his accomplices. The bishop of Litomissel, who is at the council, went twice to buy the archbishopric of Prague, but others outbid him. They follow this traffic even at Constance, where one sells and another buys a benefice."

The works of
Huss are
burnt.

At length he received another solemn deputation, in which were two cardinals and some prelates, who tried their utmost endeavours to induce him to recant. Huss, however, persisted in his integrity, and announced his resolution in terms of great vehemence and solemnity. Having withstood one more attempt of the emperor to shake his resolution, he was thus accosted by his friend John de Chlum. "I am a person of no learning, my dear Huss, and unfit to advise so learned a person as you. If you are convinced of any error, I venture, however, to advise you to retract it; if not, to endure whatever punishments shall be inflicted on you, rather than to do violence to your conscience!" An instance this of common sense and artless honesty, which deserves to be contrasted with the subtilty and intriguing spirit of the council. Huss answered with tears, that he called God to witness, how ready he was to retract sincerely and upon oath, any error, the moment he should be convinced by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, that it was an error. One of the prelates observed, "For my part, I am not so presumptuous as to prefer my private opinion to that of the whole council." "Let the meanest member of that council," replied Huss, "convince me of a mistake, and I am perfectly disposed to obey their injunctions." Some of the bishops observed, "See, how obstinate he is in his errors."

Huss refuses
to recant.

* Jerem. xxxvi.

He was now presented before the council in the presence of the emperor, the princes of the empire, and of an incredible concourse of people. The bishop of Lodi preached a sermon from those words of St. Paul, "That the body of sin might be destroyed*." With the grossest ignorance, or the most virulent and indecent malice, he perverted the words to the purpose of the council: "Destroy heresies and errors," said he, "but chiefly that obstinate heretic," pointing to the prisoner. While they were reading the articles extracted or pretended to be extracted from his works, Huss was beginning to answer to each distinctly, but was told that he might answer to them all at the same time, and was ordered at present to be silent. He expostulated against the unreasonableness of this injunction in vain. Lifting up his hands to heaven, he begged the prelates in God's name to indulge him with the freedom of speech, that he might justify himself before the people: "after which," said he, "you may dispose of me, as you shall think fit." But the prelates persisting in their refusal†, he kneeled down; and with uplifted eyes and hands, and with a loud voice, he recommended his cause to the Judge of all the earth. Being accused in the article of the sacrament, of having maintained that the material bread remains after consecration, he loudly declared, that he had never believed or taught so. Nothing could be more iniquitous than this charge, which he had fully refuted on his former examination. But the council was determined to burn him as a heretic, and it behoved them to exhibit, at any rate, some show of proving his heretical opinions. A still more shameless accusation was introduced: it was said, "A certain doctor bears witness, that Huss gave out, that he should become the fourth person in the Trinity." "What is the name of that doctor?" replied the prisoner, protesting against the charge as a flagrant calumny, and making an orthodox confession of his faith on the subject of the Trinity. Nevertheless, the bishop, who had read the accusation, refused to mention the doctor's name. Being again upbraided with his appeal to Jesus Christ, "Behold," said he, with his hands lifted up toward heaven, "most gra-

* Rom. vi.

† Page 421, L'Enfant.

cious Saviour, how the council condemns as an error what thou hast prescribed and practised, when, overborne by enemies, thou committedst thy cause to God thy Father, leaving us this example, that when we are oppressed, we may have recourse to the judgment of God. Yes," continued he, turning toward the assembly, "I have maintained and do still maintain, that an appeal made to Jesus Christ is most just and right, because He can neither be corrupted by bribes, nor be deceived by false witnesses, nor be overreached by any artifice.—I came voluntarily to this council, under the public faith of the emperor here present." In pronouncing these last words, he looked earnestly at Sigismund, who blushed at the sudden and unexpected rebuke*.

Sentence was now pronounced against both John Huss and his books; and he was ordered to be degraded. The bishops clothed him with the priest's garments, and put a chalice into his hands. While they were thus employed, he said, that "the Jews put a white garment on our Lord Jesus Christ, to mock him, when Herod delivered him to Pilate;" and he made reflections of the same kind on each of the sacerdotal ornaments. When he was fully apparelled, the prelates once more exhorted him to retract; and to this exhortation he replied with his usual firmness. They then caused him to come down from the stool, on which he stood, and pronounced these words, "O cursed Judas, who having forsaken the council of peace, art entered into that of the Jews, we take this chalice from thee, in which is the blood of Jesus Christ." But God was with the martyr, who cried aloud, "I trust, in the mercy of God, I shall drink of it this very day in his kingdom." Then they stripped him of all his vestments, one after another, uttering a curse on stripping him of each. Having completed his degradation by the addition of some other ridiculous insults not worthy of a distinct relation, they put a paper coronet on his head, on which they had painted three devils, with this inscription, ARCH-HERETIC,

* We are told, that when Charles V. was solicited at the Diet of Worms to arrest Luther, notwithstanding the safe conduct which he had granted him, he replied, "I should not choose to blush with my predecessor Sigismund."—Op. Hus. tom. ii.

and said, "We devote thy soul to the infernal devils." "I am glad," said the martyr, "to wear this crown of ignominy for the love of Him, who wore a crown of thorns."

When the painted paper was placed upon his head, one of the bishops said, "Now we commit thy soul to the devil." "But I," said Huss, "commit my spirit into thy hands, O Lord Jesus Christ, unto thee I commend my spirit which thou hast redeemed*." The council now ordered this sentence to be pronounced, namely, "The holy Synod of Constance declares, that John Huss ought to be given up to the secular power, and does accordingly so give him up, considering that the church of God has no more to do with him."

Sigismund committed the execution of Huss to the elector Palatine. The martyr, walking amidst his guards, declared his innocence to the people. When ^{His execution.} he came near the place of execution, he knelt and prayed with such fervour, that some of the people said aloud, "What this man has done before, we know not; but we hear him now offer up most excellent prayers to God." The elector Palatine prevented him from speaking to the people, and ordered him to be burned. "Lord Jesus," said Huss aloud, "I humbly suffer this cruel death for thy sake, and I pray thee to forgive all my enemies." His paper crown falling from off his head, the soldiers put it† on again, saying, that it must be burnt with the devils, whom he had served. His neck was fastened to the stake, and the wood was piled about him. The elector advanced to exhort him once more on the often repeated subject of retraction. "What I have written and taught,"—these were the words of Huss,— "was in order to rescue souls from the power of the devil, and to deliver them from the tyranny of sin; and I do gladly seal, what I have written and taught, with my blood." The elector withdrawing, the fire was kindled, and Huss was soon suffocated, having called on God as long as he could speak.

Many other circumstances of the cruel indignity with which he was treated, it is not necessary to relate. It is

* Fox, Acts, &c. Vol. I. p. 709.

† P. 429, L'Enfant.

more to our purpose to observe what Æneas Sylvius, a Roman-catholic historian, records of John Huss and of Jerom of Prague. "They went," says he, "to the stake, as to a banquet; not a word fell from them, which discovered the least timidity; they sung hymns in the flames, to the last gasp, without ceasing."

Thus, by a death, which has affixed eternal infamy on the council of Constance, slept in Jesus the celebrated John Huss, one of the most upright and blameless of men. Human depravity has not often produced a scene so completely iniquitous, and so much calculated to bring disgrace on the Roman church. The uncommon pains taken to prevent his death by a retractation, demonstrates the conviction of the council, that they were doing what they could not justify to their own consciences. At the same time the grace of God was marvellously displayed in supporting and strengthening the martyr, who appears indeed to have exhibited all the graces of a true disciple of Christ. It has often been said, that good men would not suffer persecution, if they were not so bigoted in points of sentiment. But what shall we say of the case before us? A man of the most irreproachable character suffers the most cruel death, attended with a severe course of insult and indignity, even though he could not be proved to have held any point of doctrine absolutely distinct from the creed of his adversaries: But he was a holy man; and the whole world lieth in wickedness*.

The parts and acquirements of John Huss seem to have been above mediocrity; and yet neither of them are by any means to be ranked in the highest class. A Character of Huss. vein of good sense runs through all his writings; insomuch that Luther calls him the most rational expounder of Scripture he had ever met with. His natural temper was mild and condescending; all the traces of harshness or severity which are to be found in this Reformer, must be looked for in his contests with vice.—The events of his life prove him to have possessed an exquisite tenderness of conscience, together with great piety and almost unexampled fortitude. Moreover, as the piety of this champion of the faith was perfectly free from enthusiasm or mysticism, so was his fortitude unsullied

* John, v. 19.

with vanity or ostentation. A mind of equal energy and resolution, at the same time less scrupulous and conscientious than that of Huss, somewhat less attentive to religious practice, and more inquisitive and solicitous concerning matters of opinion, such a mind, it may be supposed, would probably have got SOONER rid of the chains of superstition. There is, however, good reason to think that he had gained so considerable an insight into the prevailing ecclesiastical abuses, that it was not possible for him to have been held much longer in slavery by papal corruptions. But the wicked decree of the council of Constance shortened his life.

The council, with Sigismund at their head, still preserved the most solemn forms of religion, though their conduct continued to be destitute of humility, justice, and humanity. Gerson preached a sermon concerning the reformation of the Church, the object of which seems to have been, to transfer to the general council, that despotic power, which had been supposed, on divine authority, to rest with the pope. In the mean time, Jerom of Prague was repeatedly examined; and he continued to sustain the rigour of his confinement with patience and constancy.

It is remarkable, that a divinity professor, named Bertrand, preached on the necessity of the reformation of the Church; and strenuously exhorted the council to use the most speedy and effectual means to correct abuses; "particularly the insatiable avarice, the excessive ambition, the gross ignorance, the shameful laziness, and the execrable pride of the clergy." The council itself affected to undertake the work of reformation. They could not but be sensible, that the world had a right to expect it from them: but what hopes could be indulged of success from men, who, at the very same time, gloried in their iniquity; and wrote imperious letters into Bohemia, charging the clergy there to use all possible diligence to extirpate the followers of John Huss; that is, the very persons who had been most sincerely zealous in promoting that same reformation of the clergy, which the council pretended to regard as their capital object.

Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis
Tempus eget.

VIRG.

Something even besides solid learning and good sense was requisite for a work of this nature. Gerson excelled in both these qualities. A treatise, which he composed at this time, on the trial of spirits, abounds with excellent rules for the detection of feigned revelations and visions, and contributed to prevent the canonization of some pretended saints. But there was not in the council the unction from the Holy One*, of which St. John speaks; that is, the true faith of Christ and real Christian humility were not the ruling principles in the famous assembly at Constance.

Toward the latter end of the same year, 1415, a letter was sent to the council from Bohemia, signed by about sixty principal persons, barons, noblemen, and others of Bohemia†, an extract of which is as follows: "We know not from what motive ye have condemned John Huss, bachelor of divinity, and preacher of the Gospel. Ye have put him to a cruel and ignominious death, though convicted of no heresy. We wrote in his vindication to Sigismund, king of the Romans. This apology of ours ought to have been communicated to your congregations; but we have been told that ye burnt it in contempt of us. We protest, therefore, with the heart as well as with the lips, that John Huss was a man very honest, just, and orthodox; that for many years he conversed among us with godly and blameless manners; that during all those years he explained, to us and to our subjects, the Gospel and the books of the Old and New Testament, according to the exposition of holy doctors approved by the Church; and that he has left writings behind him in which he constantly abhors all heresy. He taught us also to detest every thing heretical. In his discourses he constantly exhorted us to the practice of peace and charity, and his own life exhibited to us a distinguished example of these virtues. After all the inquiry which we have made, we can find no blame attached to the doctrine or to the life of the said John Huss; but on the contrary every thing pious, laudable, and worthy of a true pastor. Ye have not only disgraced us by his condemnation, but have also unmerci-

Testimonial
to the cha-
racter of
Huss.

* 1 John ii. 20.

† L'Enfant, p. 595. Vol. I.

fully imprisoned, and perhaps already put to death, Jerom of Prague, a man of most profound learning and copious eloquence. Him also ye have condemned unconvicted. Notwithstanding all that hath passed, we are resolved to sacrifice our lives for the defence of the Gospel of Christ, and of his faithful preachers."—This letter was unanimously approved in an assembly of Bohemian lords, held at Prague.

John de Trocznow, chamberlain to Wenceslaus, king of Bohemia, known by the name of Zisca, or the one-eyed, was one of the Bohemian noblemen who highly resented the base conduct of the council. Wenceslaus asking him one day what he was musing upon, "I was thinking," said he, "on the affront offered to our kingdom by the death of John Huss." "It is out of your power or mine to revenge it," said the king; "but if you know which way to do it, exert yourself." From that time Zisca meditated those military projects, for which he was afterwards so famous in history.

The council, startled at the expostulations of the Bohemian lords, yet being still determined to maintain their own unjust authority; at length, partly by promises, and partly by threatenings, induced Jerom of Prague to retract his sentiments. To carry this point, they appear to have used their utmost efforts: and it is not difficult to comprehend their motives. They were anxious to avoid the infamy which would unavoidably be connected with their execution of another great and good man. Jerom's retractation was at first ambiguous and equivocal, afterwards explicit and circumstantial. He anathematized the articles both of Wickliff and of Huss, and declared that he believed every thing which the council believed. He even added, that if in future any doctrine should escape from him contrary to his recantation, he would submit to everlasting punishment! Thus was disgraced before all the world, and humbled in his own eyes, a man of most excellent morals, of superior parts, and of great learning and fortitude. Reader! this is an event, memorable in the annals of human imbecility. Consider diligently the instruction it affords. The power and the mercy of God, in owning his fallen servant, and in afterwards restoring and sup-

Jerom re-
tracts.

porting him, were magnified, in this instance, in a very striking manner.

Jerom, notwithstanding his retractation, was remanded to prison, where, however, we find he was allowed a little more liberty than before *.

The council, during these transactions, made a constant parade of reforming the Church. On Sundays and holidays, sermons were preached on that subject from time to time. One preacher said, "When a prelate is consecrated, they ask him, if he knows the Old and New Testament. Most of them, I will venture to say, cannot affirm this with a safe conscience." This same preacher inveighed, in general, with great vehemence against the vices of the clergy, which he might do with little danger to his own person, and with as little probability of profiting his audience, because he always took care at the same time to assert the unlimited power of the pope. Other sermons, to the same purport, were preached, in which the wickedness of the clergy was so keenly reproved, that we cannot but conclude that their manners must have been at that time licentious beyond measure. Dr. Abendon of Oxford, particularly exhorted bishops and other superior clergymen to apply themselves to the study of the Scriptures, rather than to the litigious and lucrative science of the canon law. He inveighed against the non-residence and the simony of the prelates. The council by their silence could bear to give a sanction to these exhortations, though they had just before condemned to the flames a pastor, who had been singularly exempt from all these vices. There were also those, who, not content with the unhappy retractation of Jerom, insisted upon his being tried a second time; and Gerson himself, with his usual zeal against heresy, was not ashamed to use his utmost efforts in promoting this most iniquitous measure.

The council actually proceeded to examine Jerom again upon the articles formerly exhibited against him, and also upon fresh articles, collected in Bohemia by certain Carmelite friars, and now for the first time brought forward. The prisoner refused to be sworn because they denied him the liberty of defence.

* L'Enfant, p. 513. Vol. I.

The admirable spirit of Jerom. Then it was that this great man, whom a long series of affliction and cruel persecution, and above all, the consciousness of his late prevarication, had brought into the lowest distress, began to exhibit that strength of mind, that force of genius and eloquence, and that integrity and fortitude, which will be the admiration of all ages. How bitterly he had repented, and mourned over his fall, and with what exercises of soul he had been disciplined in secret, the intelligent Christian may easily conceive, though we have no particular account on record. We know, indeed, that after he had acted against his conscience, he retired from the council with a heavy heart. His chains had been taken from him, but the load was transferred from his body to his mind ; and the caresses of those about him served only to mock his sorrow. The anguish of his own reflections rendered his prison a more gloomy solitude than he had ever found it before. Jerom, however, was not an apostate ; and the God whom he served, had compassion on the infirmities of his nature, and did not desert him in his humiliation. No : He made his latter end to be blessed, and glorious.

“ How unjust is it,” exclaimed this Christian hero, “ that ye will not hear me ! Ye have confined me three hundred and forty days in several prisons, where I have been cramped with irons, almost poisoned with dirt and stench, and pinched with the want of all necessaries. During this time ye always gave to my enemies a hearing, but refused to hear me so much as a single hour. I wonder not, that since ye have indulged them with so long and so favourable an audience, they should have had the address to persuade you that I am a heretic, an enemy to the faith, a persecutor of the clergy, and a villain. Thus prejudiced ye have judged me unheard, and ye still refuse to hear me. Remember, however, that ye are but men ; and as such ye are fallible, and may suffer others to impose on you. It is said, that all learning and all wisdom is collected in this council. The more then does it behove you to take heed that ye act not rashly, lest ye should be found to act unjustly. I know that it is the design of this council to inflict sentence of

death upon me. But when all is done, I am an object of small importance, who must die sooner or later. Therefore what I say is more for your sakes than my own. It ill becomes the wisdom of so many great men to pass an unjust decree against me, and by this to establish a precedent for consequences much more pernicious than my death can be." The council was so far moved by his reasonings, that they resolved, after he had answered to the articles, to grant him liberty of speech. All the articles were read to him, one after another: and his answers were delivered with an acuteness and dexterity, which astonished the court. When he was upbraided with the grossest calumnies, he stood up, with extended hands, and in a sorrowful tone cried out, "Which way, Fathers, shall I turn? Whom shall I call upon for help, or to bear witness to my innocence? Shall I make my address to you? But my persecutors have entirely alienated your minds from me, by saying that I am myself a persecutor of my judges. If ye give them credit, I have nothing to hope for." But, it being impossible to bring the affair to an issue at that time, because of the number of the accusations, the court was adjourned to another day *. The court adjourned.

The former examination took place on May 23d, 1416, and he was called again before the council, according to adjournment, on the 26th of the same month. Further examination of Jerom, A. D. 1416, May 26. On that day the remaining articles were read to him. After he had answered all the charges, owning some, denying others, and clearing up the rest, he was told, that though he had been convicted of heresy by proofs and witnesses most unexceptionable, yet they gave him liberty to speak, so that he might defend himself or retract; only, if he persisted in his errors, he must expect judgment without mercy.

Jerom, having gained this liberty of speech, though with much difficulty and opposition, determined to avail himself of the opportunity. He began with Eloquence of Jerom. invoking the grace of God so to govern his heart and his lips that he might advance nothing but what should conduce to the salvation of his soul. "I am

* Page 596, L'Enfant.

not ignorant," continued he, "that many excellent men have been borne down by false witnesses, and unjustly condemned." He proved this from various instances adduced both from sacred and profane history. "Moses," said he, "was often scandalized by his brethren; Joseph was sold through envy; and afterwards imprisoned upon false reports. Isaiah, Daniel, and almost all the prophets, were unjustly persecuted. And was not John the Baptist, Jesus Christ himself, and most of his Apostles, put to death as ungodly, seditious persons? In other books as well as the Bible we have similar instances. Socrates was most unjustly condemned by his countrymen; he might indeed have saved his life by doing violence to his conscience, but he preferred death to a disingenuous recantation. Plato, Anaxagoras, Zeno, and many others, were maltreated in various ways."—"It is a shameful thing," continued Jerom, "for one priest to be condemned unjustly by another; but the height of iniquity is, when this is done by a council, and a college of priests." He gave so probable an account of the reasons of the malice of his adversaries, that for some moments he seemed to have convinced his judges. "I came here of my own accord," said he, "to justify myself, which a man conscious of guilt would scarcely have done. Those who know the course of my life and studies, know that my time has been spent in exercises and works of a very different tendency from any thing wicked or heretical. As to my sentiments, the most learned men of all times have had different opinions concerning religion; they disputed about it, not to combat the truth, but to illustrate it. St. Augustine, and his contemporary St. Jerome, were not always of the same opinion, yet were not on that account accused of heresy. I shall make no apology for my sentiments, because I am not conscious of maintaining any error; nor shall I retract, because it becomes not me to retract the false accusations of my enemies." He then extolled John Huss, vindicated the innocence of that holy martyr, and declared that he was ready to suffer after his example. "This pastor," said he, "by finding fault with the abuses of the clergy, and the pride of the prelates, did not act against the church

of God.” He declared that he hoped one day to see his accusers, and to call them to judgment before the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge of the world. He accused the council of an act of high injustice in trying him a second time on the same indictment, and declared that he should never acknowledge the authority of the new commissioners, but should look on them as judges * sitting in the chair of PESTILENCE. “I came,” said he, “to Constance to defend John Huss, because I had advised him to go thither, and had promised to come to his assistance, in case he should be oppressed. Nor am I ashamed here to make public confession of my own cowardice. I confess, and tremble while I think of it, that through fear of punishment by fire, I basely consented against my conscience to the condemnation of the doctrine of Wickliff and Huss.” He then declared that he disowned his recantation, as the greatest crime of which he had ever been guilty; and that he was determined to his last breath to adhere to the principles of those two men, which were as sound and pure as their lives were holy and blameless. He excepted indeed Wickliff’s opinion of the sacrament, and declared his agreement with the Roman church in the article of transubstantiation. Having concluded his speech, he was carried back to prison, and was there visited by several persons, who hoped to reclaim him, but in vain.

On May 30th, Jerom being brought again before the council, the bishop of Lodi preached a sermon from these words, “He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart †.” He exhorted the prisoner not to show himself incorrigible, as he had hitherto done. He paid some tribute of praise to his extraordinary abilities, and at the same time extolled the lenity and generosity with which he had been treated by the council. The reader, now in possession of the facts, might smile at this gross flattery, if the subject were less grave and less affecting. Jerom, raising himself on a bench, undertook to confute the preacher. He declared again, that he had done nothing in his whole life, of which he so bitterly repented, as his recantation;

The bishop
of Lodi
preaches.

* Page 583, L’Enfant.

† Mark xvi. 14.

that he revoked it from his very soul, as also the letter which he had been induced to write on that subject to the Bohemians; that he had been guilty of the meanest falsehood by making that recantation; and that he esteemed John Huss a holy man. At the same time he declared, that he knew no heresy to which Huss was attached, unless they should call by that name his open disapprobation of the vices of the clergy; and that if after this declaration credit should still be given to the false witness borne against him, he should consider the fathers of the council themselves as unworthy of all belief. "This pious man," said Jerom, alluding to John Huss, "could not bear to see the revenues of the church, which were principally designed for the maintenance of the poor, and for works of liberality, spent in debauchery with women, in feasts, hounds, furniture, gaudy apparel, and other expenses, unworthy of Christianity."

The firmness, eloquence, and zeal of Jerom, sensibly affected the council. They proposed to him once more to retract. But he replied, "Ye have determined to condemn me unjustly; but after my death I shall leave a sting in your consciences, and a worm that shall never die. I appeal to the Sovereign Judge of all the earth, in whose presence ye must appear to answer me." After sentence had been pronounced against him, he was delivered to the secular power. He was treated with scorn and insult, similar to that which his friend Huss had experienced. He put the mitre with his own hands on his head*, saying that he was glad to wear it for the sake of Him, who was crowned with one of thorns. As he went to execution, he sung the Apostles' creed, and the hymns of the church, with a loud voice and a cheerful countenance. He kneeled at the stake, and prayed. Being then bound, he raised his voice, and sung a paschal hymn then much in vogue in the church †.

Jerom condemned;

and executed.

Hail! happy day, and ever be adored,
When hell was conquered by great heaven's Lord.

The executioner approaching to the pile behind his

* L'Enfant, Vol. I. p. 591.

† Salve, festa dies, toto venerabilis ævo,
Qua Deus infernum vicit, et astra tenens.

back, lest Jerom should see him, "Come forward," said the martyr to him, "and put fire to it before my face *." He continued alive in the flames a full quarter of an hour. And there is the most unanimous testimony given by all writers, Hussite and Roman-catholic, to the heroic courage and fortitude with which he sustained the torment. When he was much scorched with the fury of the fire, and almost smothered in its flame, he was heard to cry out, "O Lord God, have mercy on me! have mercy on me!" And a little afterward, "Thou knowest how I have loved thy truth." By and by, the wind parted the flames, and exhibited his body full of large blisters, a dreadful spectacle to the beholders; yet even then his lips are said to have continued still moving, as if his mind was actuated by intense devotion.

Poggius, a celebrated Florentine, who had been the secretary of John XXIII. and was present at these scenes, has left the most unequivocal testimony Testimony of Poggius. to the abilities, fortitude, and eloquence of Jerom. I have already given the most material historical facts which he mentions.

"I confess," says this writer, "I never knew the art of speaking carried so near the model of ancient eloquence. It was amazing to hear with what force of expression, fluency of language, and excellent reasoning, he answered his adversaries; nor was I less struck with the gracefulness of his manner, the dignity of his action, and the firmness and constancy of his whole behaviour. It grieved me to think so great a man was labouring under so atrocious an accusation. Whether this accusation be just or not, God knows: I make no inquiry into the merits of the case; I submit to those who know more of it than I do.

"The assembly," continues Poggius, "was very unruly and indecent; yet it is incredible with what acuteness the prisoner answered, and with what surprising dexterity he warded off every stroke of his adversaries. Nothing escaped him: his whole behaviour was truly great and pious.

"He took great pains to show that very little credit

* L'Enfant, Vol. I. p. 599.

was due to the witnesses produced against him. He laid open the sources of their hatred to him ; and in that way made a strong impression on the minds of his hearers. He lamented the cruel and unjust death of that holy man John Huss, and said he was armed with a full resolution to follow the steps of that blessed martyr.

“ It was impossible to hear this pathetic orator without emotion. Every ear was captivated, and every heart touched. Throughout his whole oration he showed a most amazing strength of memory. He had been confined almost a year in a dungeon, the severity of which usage he complained of, but in the language of a great and good man. In this horrid place he was deprived of books and paper, yet notwithstanding this, and the constant anxiety of his mind, he was no more at a loss for proper authorities and quotations, than if he had spent the intermediate time at leisure in his study.

“ His voice was sweet and full, and his action every way proper either to express indignation, or to raise pity ; but he made no affected application to the passions. Firm and intrepid, he stood before the council, collected in himself, and not only contemning, but seeming desirous of death. The greatest character in ancient story could not possibly have exceeded him. If there be any justice in history, this man will be admired by all posterity. I call him a prodigious man, and the epithet is not extravagant. I was an eye-witness of his whole behaviour, and could easily be more prolix on a subject so copious*.”

Such is the testimony of this ingenuous papist to an adversary. His friend Aretin, to whom he wrote the letter of which the above is an extract, was much less candid. “ You attribute,” says he, “ to this man more than I could wish. You ought at least to WRITE more cautiously of these things.” It has been well observed, that Poggius would probably have written more cautiously, had he written a few days afterward. But his letter is dated on the very day of Jerom’s execution. It came warm from the writer’s heart, and proves sufficiently what HE thought of the council of Constance and their proceedings.

* Letter of Poggius to Aretin.

Notwithstanding this valuable memoir, I could wish to have been enabled to give a more edifying account of the martyrdom of Jerom: but in this point the materials of history are defective. We must ever expect that writers will record what they esteem important, and pass over what they conceive is better buried in oblivion. Unless, therefore, they have some taste for evangelical principles, and evangelical practice, they will take no notice of many things, which to them appear bordering upon fanaticism or enthusiasm. In the instance before us, indeed, it is very probable that Jerom himself had no very accurate or systematical acquaintance with the truth of the Gospel. The knowledge, however, which he had, doubtless respected the essential doctrines of Christianity; and his spirit and constancy in suffering, his dependence on the grace of Christ, his joyful expectation of a blessed resurrection, and his humble confession of sinfulness and unworthiness, sufficiently distinguish him from the stoic philosopher, or the mere moralist, who, whatever portion he may have of the first of these qualities, is totally void of all the rest. It is remarkable, that Poggius observes, in the same letter, that "Jerom met his fate with a cheerful countenance and with MORE THAN STOICAL constancy."

Let the reader now compare the caution and candour of Poggius the Florentine, with the infatuated bigotry of Theodoric Vrie, a monk, who flourished at the same time. His report of Jerom's execution is, "That holding the crown that was given him, a crown of dishonour, abomination, and turpitude, he uttered these words; *The Lord Jesus Christ, my God, was crowned for my sake with a crown of thorns, and I will gladly wear this crown for his glory.* After having said this, he kneeled down for a few minutes, and then rising up, he sung the creed from the beginning to the end. Thus did the wretched man excite the compassion of all that saw him go along in that miserable condition, without taking any compassion of himself. Then being led to the stake, he was stripped of his clothes, and bound to it; and there, being all naked, in the midst of the scorching flames, he sung those words; *O Lord, into thy hands I resign my spirit;* and just as he

was saying, *Thou hast redeemed us*, he was suffocated by the flame and the smoke, and gave up his wretched soul. Thus did this heretical miscreant resign his miserable spirit to be burnt everlastingly in the bottomless pit."—Vid. M. Von der Hardt. tom. i.

Among other valuable purposes to which the council of Constance was rendered subservient under Divine

General corruption of the hierarchy. Providence, this was not of the least importance, that the wickedness of the ecclesiastical

system, then prevalent in Europe, was demonstrated before all the world. All the knowledge and ability, which Europe could afford, was collected at Constance; yet the able and learned fathers of this council were so far from reforming the evils of what they called the Church, that they proved it to be Antichrist more certainly than ever. It could no longer be said, that the particular character of such or such popes was the cause of the crimes of the clergy; the whole of the then clerical establishment concurred in support of iniquity.

I have already taken notice of the confession, which, in the sermon preached at Constance, they themselves made of the extreme wickedness of the Church. Another remarkable instance of the same kind occurred on Whitsunday, the seventh of June, a very little time after the death of Jerom. A doctor preached a sermon from these words: "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." "Instead of the seven gifts," says the preacher, "which God granted to the Apostles, I fear that the devil keeps his Pentecost in the hearts of most of the clergy, and that he has inspired them with the seven contrary vices." He then gave a catalogue of those vices.

But let not malicious infidelity exult in these incontrovertible proofs of the corrupt state of the Church. One of the essential doctrines of Christianity, namely, original sin, or the native depravity of man, as an apostate creature, is strongly illustrated by the general wickedness of merely nominal Christians. In the Roman Church the real Gospel itself was then neither understood, nor preached, nor valued. Hence the natural wickedness of mankind met with no resistance: even the papists could see that the whole ecclesiastical system was vicious in its head and

members, yet they trifled respecting sins with the most scandalous levity, and persecuted to death those very persons, who earnestly opposed the corruption of the times.

All this, however, affords no just ground of triumph to the infidel. The mere nominal Christian is, in a scriptural sense, an unbeliever as well as himself; and while neither of these characters OVERCOMES THE WORLD, because he has not true FAITH*, it is abundantly evident, and I trust it has appeared so from the course of this history, that where real Christianity is understood and received, there sincerity, and all genuine virtues, do actually thrive and adorn the Gospel.

In the year 1417, on the day of Epiphany, a sermon was preached in full council, which described the abuses of the Church in so strong a manner, that if the preacher had intended to justify the reformation attempted by Huss and Jerom, and completed a hundred years after in several parts of Europe by the protestant reformers, he could not have added much to the vehemence of his invectives. The clergy were by him taxed with pride and the love of power, with the bad distribution of benefices, the mal-administration of the sacraments, the neglect of the study of the Scriptures and of the preaching of the Gospel, and the injustice of their ecclesiastical decrees. "Abomination," cried he, "appears even within these walls, nor are we without instances both of the most scandalous passions, and the basest actions." Could a preacher have been permitted with impunity to draw so frightful a picture in the face of the church in full council, if it had not been corrupt in the extreme; and must there not have been a radical apostacy from the real faith of Christ, where such fruits were suffered to abound?

In this year the followers of Huss, under the famous Zisca and Nicholas de Hussinetz, began to exert themselves in opposition to the hierarchy, but certainly in a manner by no means agreeable to the genius of Christianity. They made use of fire and sword; and the latter of these leaders is said† to have collected together in a mountain, which was afterwards called

A sermon
preached in
the council,
on the day
of the
Epiphany,
A.D. 1417.

Hussites
under Zisca.

* 1 John v. 4, 5.

† Dubravius.

Tabor *, forty thousand Hussites, to have arranged them in companies, and administered to them the communion in both kinds. This last point of ecclesiastical regulation seems to have been the predominant article of the faith of the majority of the party, so little did they understand the nature of the Gospel ! It was indeed the great defect of the whole Bohemian reformation, that, zealous as it was against the popish abominations, it entered not with energy and perspicuity into the genuine, essential doctrines of the Gospel ; and thus, as must ever be the case, while external practice is the principal object, these reformers were not able to improve, in any considerable degree, that very practice to which they directed their chief attention. Instead of laying the axe to the root, instead of expounding the doctrines of grace, and preaching the real faith of Christ, and patiently suffering persecution, they took the cause into their own hands, and avenged themselves of their enemies by the sword. Their ill success in the issue, compared with the decisive victories gained over popery afterwards at the Reformation, by those who preached the real scripture-doctrine of justification before God, and who allowed the use of no other arms against popery than “ FAITH WHICH WORKETH BY LOVE,” gives us a salutary lesson, how upon all occasions, in this earthly scene of the trial of the patience and resignation of the righteous, divine truth ought to be defended. To be incited by a zeal, however flaming, against the errors and evil of popery, is not sufficient ; it behoves the Christian champion to fight with spiritual, not with carnal weapons, to regulate his zeal by Christian knowledge, humility, faith, meekness, and patience, and to aim chiefly at the purification of the heart by the practical use of the doctrine of Christ crucified, under the influence of the Divine Spirit. But in these things the Hussites were poorly furnished ; and they miscarried, because they attempted to cleanse the OUTSIDE OF THE CUP AND PLATTER, before they had cleansed that WHICH WAS WITHIN†.

It was a gloomy season of the church when the ma-

* The Hussites erected tents in the mountain. And the word Tabor means TENT in the Bohemian language. The mountain Tabor is only a few miles from Prague.

† Matt. xxvii. 26.

jority of those, who had the greatest sincerity in religion, made their capital object to be a * sacramental circumstance, though certainly scriptural and perfectly well founded. The fact is, they understood very little of the native depravity of man, on which the use and necessity of the Gospel depend. A gloomy season truly! when two men, of talents and learning, and uncommonly honest and upright, lost their lives for the support of a good conscience; and when even these, who, it is not to be doubted, died in the faith of Jesus, possessed little clearness of understanding in that faith, and were encumbered with so much rubbish of superstition as to be incapable of giving clear and effectual instruction to their followers and admirers. And further, when the general mass of Christians, even all the dignitaries assembled at Constance, could do no more than acknowledge the necessity of reformation, while many of them constantly practised the foulest abominations, and were ready to burn in the flames as heretics any persons, whose knowledge, and zeal, and morals, and conduct, conveyed, by a laudable contrast, a censure on their own principles and practice. The preciousness of real gospel-light, and the duty of cherishing and obeying it, when it is once understood, was never more strikingly evinced.

Whether this account may be thought to bear too hard upon the character of the clergy at that time in general, and of the council in particular, let the reader judge when he has attended to a few extracts from a sermon of Bernard, a French abbot. This divine told the council, that, "with very few exceptions, they were an assembly of Pharisees, who, under the mask of processions, and other external acts of devotion, made a farce of religion and the church. I am sorry," proceeds he, "to say it, that in our days the catholic faith is reduced to nothing; hope is turned into a rash presumption, and the love of God and our neighbour is quite extinct. Among the laity, falsehood bears the chief sway; and avarice predominates among the clergy. Among the prelates there is nothing but malice, iniquity, &c. At the pope's court there is no sanctity; law-suits and quarrels being the

* Communion in both kinds.

felicity of that court, and imposture its delight." He then exhorted them to make a real reformation, to punish the guilty, and to choose a good pope. This zealous preacher saw not the root of all these evils, namely, the lamentable departure from Christian principles; and, like many other declaimers against vice, he knew no remedy but the arguments of mere moral suasion and external discipline. The power of the blood of Christ, in purging the conscience * from dead works to serve the living God, seems to have been generally unknown at that time; and till men are brought to know something of their own native depravity, they are always too proud to submit to the righteousness of God †.

We have already mentioned the beginning of the intestine distractions in Bohemia. These proceeded to such a length as to produce scenes perfectly tragical. Distractions in Bohemia. The university of Prague declared in favour of the communion in both kinds, and the greatest part of both the clergy and laity followed their decision. Wenceslaus, the king, more out of fear than good will to the Hussites, granted them a great many churches, in which they administered the Eucharist according to the scriptural institution, and also entered every day into new engagements not to obey the council. By these means, many of the Bohemian clergy were stript of their revenues, and they stirred up the friends of the church of Rome to oppose the innovations. Vast numbers of highwaymen and banditti took the opportunity of this confusion to exercise all acts of violence and robbery with impunity. Wenceslaus, instead of exerting the requisite authority, abandoned Prague, retired to a castle, and minded nothing but his pleasure, while his whole kingdom was in combustion ‡.

It was not probable that the council of Constance should be able to restore peace and good order to Bohemia; for they themselves, in a great measure, had been the cause of the existing troubles. It is however true, that they left no stone unturned in their endeavours to re-establish the corrupt custom of administering the sacrament in one kind only. By their order, Gerson com-

* Heb. ix.

† Rom. x.

‡ Theobald's War of the Hussites.

posed a treatise against the communion in both kinds, which was publicly read in the assembly ; but which, in fact, was little calculated to compose the differences. Conscious of the difficulty of supporting his main point by the authority of Scripture alone, he observes, that in order to understand revelation aright, recourse should be had to human laws, decrees, and the glosses of holy doctors. He maintains, that those who presume to interpret Scripture contrary to what is taught in the Scripture, as DECLARED BY THE CHURCH, and observed by the faithful, ought to be severely punished, rather than dealt with by argument. The whole treatise was unworthy of the learning and sagacity of Gerson, and deserved no notice here, except for the purpose of showing under what strong delusions those are permitted to lie, who love not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness. The judicious L'Enfant, who is rarely liberal in his censures, breaks out on occasion of the last-mentioned sentiment of Gerson, in the following terms : "I own, I don't understand Gerson's logic on this occasion. He draws a very blunt and rash inference ; especially as it was the most improper thing in the world he could say to induce the Hussites of Bohemia to come to Constance, whither they were summoned."

The five nations, for the Spaniards were now added to the French, the Germans, the English, and the Italians, proceeded to elect a pope ; and the choice fell upon Otho de Colonna, who took the name of Martin V. This happened in the latter end of the year 1417. All these nations, on the day after the pope's coronation, concurred in a resolution to demand of the new pope the reformation of the church which he had promised to make after he should be elected. He gave them good words, but did nothing effectual. The Germans were uneasy at his delays, and so were the French ; though these, by joining with the Italians and the Spaniards, had caused the deferring of the reformation till after the election of a pope. The answer, which Sigismund gave to the French, was severe, but just : "When I urged you that the church might be reformed before the pope was elected, you would not consent: you

Five nations
demand a re-
formation of
the church,

A.D. 1417.

would have a pope before the reformation. Go to him yourselves. I have not the same power which I had while the See was vacant *." It is the office of history to do justice to all characters; on which account it behoves us to declare, that Sigismund, grossly perfidious as he had shown himself in regard to Huss, appears to have been sincerely desirous of a partial reformation in the church. He had neither the knowledge nor the zeal sufficient to lead him to any thing like an evangelical reformation; but, with many other popish princes, he wished to set bounds to the tyranny of the pope, to reduce him from the state of a despot to that of a limited monarch, to check his encroachments on the rights and property both of sovereigns and of subjects, and to bring the church into a state of decorum and order. Sigismund certainly intended all this; and if he failed of obtaining the blessing of God even on his laudable purposes, the Christian reader will recollect that this man persecuted the church of God, lived wickedly, and hated the real principles of the Gospel of Christ. Before the election of Martin V. the emperor, with the Germans and the English, was zealous that the reformation of the church should precede the election of a new pontiff; and Robert Halam, bishop of Salisbury, had distinguished himself particularly in this point. He was the favourite of the emperor; but his death at Constance gave a fatal blow to the designs of those who were anxious to oppose the ambition of the Italians. Not only the French, but even the English, strenuous as they had been for the correction of abuses while Halam lived, deserted the emperor; and he was left in a minority with his Germans. The memorial of this last nation deserves to be mentioned. They complained, that "the popes had assumed to themselves the judgment of all causes both ecclesiastical and civil; that by a horrid abuse, even more scandalous than simony, they taxed and rated crimes like merchandize, selling pardons of sins for ready money, and granting indulgences altogether unusual; that they admitted persons of licentious manners into sacred orders, and that since offices were become thus saleable, no one thought knowledge and virtue to be necessary qualifications."

It is extraordinary, that any modern writers should undertake to vindicate the papacy from the charges of protestants, when it appears repeatedly, that nothing could be said worse of it by its enemies, than what was confessed by the very members of the church of Rome. It is very true, that the conduct of these members of the Romish church was in the main inconsistent with their professions and declarations. With what face could these Germans charge Huss with heresy, for saying the very same things which they themselves said? And why should Luther be condemned as too severe against the practice of indulgences, when he only represented that grand corruption in the same light in which it had been openly represented by his ancestors in this council? But so imperious were the Italian cardinals, that they used very threatening language, accusing both the emperor, and those who favoured his views, of heresy. They also added craft to their menaces, and by degrees drew over the German deputies themselves to their party; and at length Sigismund, being left alone, consented that the choice of a pope should be previous to the reformation. This was all that the Italians desired; for Martin and his cardinals contrived to elude the wishes of the nations for reform. And thus, the French, who, with Gerson as their adviser, had condemned the upright servants of God, the Germans, who, with Sigismund at their head, had supported the accusation against them, and the English, who had persecuted the followers of Wickliff, and joined in the cry against Huss and Jerom, all these very deservedly became the dupes of papal artifice; and the nations were destined for another century to groan under one of the most intolerable of all governments. The glory of God, the truths of the Gospel, and the real kingdom of Jesus Christ, being kept out of sight by all parties, none of them regarding reformation much further than it concerned their own interested views, nothing that deserved the name of reformation ensued. Among the valuable lessons to be learnt from the history of the council of Constance, this is one; namely, Those who really mean to serve God and his Christ, and to profit mankind in religion, whether they be pastors, or synods, must begin, if the

people be in a state of ignorance, with explaining the written word of God ; they must plainly set forth the essential doctrines of salvation by Jesus Christ, and then erect the whole structure of the reformation upon those doctrines.

How void the council was of all true knowledge of the scripture-doctrines of salvation, will appear from the bull by which the pope dissolved that assembly. An extract of it is as follows : “ Martin, bishop, servant of the servants of God, at the request of the sacred council, we dismiss it. Moreover, by the authority of Almighty God, and of the blessed Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and by our own authority, we grant to all the members of the council plenary absolution of all their sins once in their lives, so that every one of them, within two months after the notification of this privilege has come to his knowledge, may enjoy the benefit of the said absolution in form. We also grant them the same privilege in the moment of death ; and we extend it to the domestics, as well as to the masters, on condition, that from the day of the notification, both the one and the other fast every Friday, during a whole year, for the absolution granted to them while alive ; and another year for their absolution in the moment of death, unless there be some lawful impediment, in which case they shall do other works of piety. And after the second year they shall be obliged to fast on Fridays during life, or to do some other acts of piety, on pain of incurring the displeasure of Almighty God and of the blessed Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul.”

I hasten to close the history of this council, because in the latter part of their proceedings there is little that falls within my plan. Martin V. by making agreements with the nations separately, found means to defeat all attempts after any thing that might deserve the name of a general and effectual reformation. But though this new pontiff seemed reluctant and dilatory in correcting abuses, he soon discovered a disposition sufficiently active in supporting his own authority.

He persecuted the Hussites most vigorously. These were divided into two bodies, the Calixtines*, who

* From calix, the cup.

differed from the church of Rome only in the affair of the new communion in both kinds; and the Taborites, mentioned above, who are thought to have much resembled the Waldenses. A greater encomium, the circumstances of those times being fully considered, could scarcely be passed upon them. But it is difficult to reconcile this encomium with the accounts of their military ferocity. Most probably, wheat was mixed with the tares; and while one part of the people lived the life of “the faith of the Son of God*,” the other could produce few marks of zeal in the cause of religion, except those which were of a bloody and violent kind.

Under the auspices of the council of Constance, paganism was extirpated in Samogitia by the king of Poland. Historical justice required that this fact should be mentioned:—yet I know no evidences of real conversion among the Samogitians; but the very introduction of Christian formalities among idolaters, ought to be esteemed, on the whole, a considerable advantage to a nation.

This celebrated council, which began to sit in 1414, was dissolved in 1418.

Dissolution of the council of Constance, A.D. 1418.

If the materials of evangelical history appear by no means in quantity proportioned to the length of this Chapter, the importance of the salutary lessons connected with the information it contains, may be thought a sufficient apology for the defect. A great effort was made by the united wisdom of Europe, but in vain, to effect that reformation, which God alone in his own time produced in such a manner, as to illustrate the divine declaration, Salvation is “not by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts†.”

CHAP. III.

THE HUSSITES, TILL THE BEGINNING OF THE REFORMATION.

WE have seen with what indignation the Bohemians heard of the murder of John Huss and Jerom of Prague. To this cause historians ascribe the commencement of the Hussite war, which was carried on by the enraged

* Gal. xi. 20.

† Zech. iv. 6.—See Appendix, Council of Constance.

Bohemians for three years under the famous Zisca, and for ten years after his death.

The historian of the church of Christ withdraws from a scene crowded with almost incredible victories over the emperor, and with inhuman cruelties on both sides.

The main body of the discontented Bohemians were at length satisfied with the liberty of the cup in the sacrament, and with the administration of the ordinance in their own language.

Peace between
the papal
party and the
Bohemians,
A.D. 1433.

These points, after the effusion of a deluge of blood, were given up by the papal party in the year 1433, and a treaty of peace was made, of which these formed the basis. In other respects, the Calixtines resembled the papists, by whose artifices they were induced even to persecute the genuine followers of Huss. These last mentioned, the true Hussites, besides the scriptural celebration of the sacrament, desired to see a real reformation of the church, and the establishment of purity of doctrine and discipline. But, after a long series of military confusion, they found themselves still a persecuted body of men; and those of them who had been inclined to have recourse to the sword, were gradually convinced, that patient faith and perseverance in prayer are the proper arms of a Christian soldier. Never indeed was there a more striking instance of the inefficacy of carnal weapons in defending the church of Christ. The Bohemians had carried on war for thirteen years, often with great success, and always with undaunted courage and fortitude; and in the end, they gained only two privileges, merely of an external nature, in the administration of the Lord's Supper. With these the majority of the people remained content, and still adhered to the papal abominations; while the real Christians were exposed as much as ever to the persecutions of the church of Rome, and were not only abandoned, but also cruelly treated by their brethren.

In the mean time the council of Basil succeeded that of Constance. But the reader, who has with me examined the motives which appear to have influenced the last-mentioned council, will not perhaps be disposed to take the same pains with that of Basil, which was conducted on a similar plan of secular intrigue and ambition.

Among its other objects, the reduction of Bohemia to the papal system was not forgotten; and Rokyzan, a Calixtine, was allured, by the hopes of the archbishopric of Prague, to second the views of the papal party. He was elected archbishop in 1436, and laboured to induce the Bohemians to be content without the cup, and in all other things to conform to the Romish doctrine and worship.

Rokyzan
chosen arch-
bishop of
Prague,
A. D. 1436.

The genuine followers of Huss were, however, not without hopes of engaging him to promote a more complete reformation. His sister's son, Gregory, who was in a great measure the founder of the unity of the Hussite brethren, solicited him in the most pressing manner to promote vital godliness. But Rokyzan, though he had light enough to approve of the pious intentions of his nephew, could not, through fear of losing his archiepiscopal dignity, be prevailed on to oppose the Romish corruptions; yet he advised the Hussites to edify one another in private, and gave them some good books for that purpose. He also obtained for them permission to withdraw to the lordship of Lititz, on the confines of Silesia and Moravia, and there to regulate their plan of worship according to their own consciences.

About the year 1453, a number of Hussites repaired to Lititz, and chose Michael Bradazius for their minister. He, with some assistants, under the direction of Gregory, held a conference in 1457, in which the plan of the Hussite church, or that of the United Brethren, was formed; idolatrous rites were prohibited, and a strictness of discipline, resembling that of the primitive Christian church, was instituted. Discipline, indeed, was a favourite object of this people; and if their attention to this subordinate circumstance had been connected with what is of much greater moment, an accurate and luminous system of Christian doctrine, far more salutary consequences would have ensued. In this the Hussites were certainly defective, though by no means fundamentally so; and hence, while they were pursuing a matter of inferior importance, they failed to promote the spirit of godliness in so great a degree as they had expected.

The Hussites
choose Bra-
dazius their
minister,
A. D. 1453 :
formed a
church,
A. D. 1457.

The inward life and vigour of their church corresponded not with the purity of its external system, nor could distressed consciences find among them that comfort and liberty which are so necessary to propagate godliness to any great extent. In one point, however, they proved themselves the genuine followers of Christ; they determined to make use of no carnal weapons for the defence of religion; and no more to suffer the name of Hussites to be disgraced by such unchristian methods, as it formerly had been.

They were soon called to the exercise of that passive courage which they professed. The increase of their congregations in Bohemia and Moravia was beheld with suspicion both by Romish and Calixtine priests, and they were accused of an intention to renew the Taborite tumults, and to seize the government. Those professors of godliness, who have been so far misled by false zeal, or the love of the world, as to take the sword in defence of religion, little know the injury which they do to the cause which they undertake to support. Profane minds are always malicious, and will be ever apt to charge all who profess the same truths, with the same seditious spirit, of which they have once seen some instances. The Hussites, therefore, loaded with the infamy of their predecessors, had now no remedy. Even George Podiebrad, who was elected king of Bohemia in 1458, and who had hitherto protected them, now consented to persecute the United Brethren.

The United Brethren are persecuted in A.D. 1458, by Podiebrad, king of Bohemia.

They had hoped for support in Rokyzan, whose ministry had formerly been useful to their souls. With a degree of evangelical light, this man still followed the world, and lived in miserable grandeur, dearly purchased at the expense of a good conscience. The following is an extract of a letter, which the brethren wrote to him while they laboured under the imputations of promoting needless divisions. It will give the reader some idea of their principles and spirit*.

A letter of the United Brethren.

* Joachim Camerarius de Ecclesiis in Bohemia et Moravia, p. 61.—I have consulted this treatise, and made use of it as my guide in this chapter, in connexion with Crantz's History of the Brethren, published by La Trobe.

“Your sermons have been highly grateful and pleasant to us. You earnestly exhorted us to flee from the horrible errors of antichrist, revealed in these last days. You taught us, that the devil introduced the abuses of the sacraments, and that men placed a false hope of salvation in them. You confirmed to us, from the writings of the apostles, and from the examples of the primitive church, the true doctrine of those divine institutions. Being distressed in our consciences, and distracted by the variety of opinions which prevailed in the church, we were induced to follow your advice, which was to attend the ministry of Peter Chelezitius, whose discourses and writings gave us a clearer insight into Christian truths, insomuch, that when we saw that your life and practice were at variance with your doctrine, we were constrained to entertain doubts concerning your religious character. When we conversed with you on this occasion, your answer was to this effect: ‘I know that your sentiments are true; but if I should patronize your cause, I must incur the same infamy and disgrace which you do.’ Whence we understood, that you would desert us, rather than relinquish the honours of the world. Having now no refuge but in God, we implored him to make known to us the mystery of his will. As a gracious father, he hath looked upon our afflictions, and hath heard our prayers. Trusting in our God, we have assembled ourselves in the unity of the faith by which we have been justified through Jesus Christ, and of which we were made partakers in conformity to the image of his death, that we might be the heirs of eternal life. Do not imagine that we have separated ourselves from you on account of certain rites and ceremonies instituted by men, but on account of evil and corrupt doctrine. For if we could, in connexion with you, have preserved the true faith in Jesus Christ our Lord, we never should have made this separation.”

Thus does it appear that the Hussite brethren were not mere schismatics, but properly reformed protestants, who separated from the church of Rome on account of the essentials of godliness, and be-
Persecution of them.
cause, in that church, they could not preserve the genuine

faith of the Gospel, and purity of worship. And the constancy with which they endured persecution, showed that they had not received the grace of God in vain. For now they were declared unworthy of the common rights of subjects; and, in the depth of winter, were driven out of the cities and villages, with the forfeiture of all their effects. The sick were thrown into the open fields, where many perished with cold and hunger. Various sorts of torture were inflicted on the brethren: numbers were barbarously murdered, and many died in the prisons.

During these melancholy scenes, Gregory, the nephew of Rokyzan, was distinguished by his zeal, fortitude, and charity. To these virtues he added prudence and discretion, of which he gave a remarkable instance*. The governor of Prague apprehending danger to the brethren to be at hand, had the kindness to warn Gregory to withdraw from Prague, which he did accordingly†. Some of the brethren were disgusted at this conduct, and boasted that the rack was their breakfast, and the flames their dinner. Part, however, of these men failed on the trial, and recanted, to save their lives; though of the lapsed, some bemoaned their fall, and recovered by repentance. Gregory himself, on another occasion, underwent with patience the tortures of the rack. In the extremity of his suffering he fell into a swoon, and was believed to have expired‡. His uncle Rokyzan hasted to the prison at the news, and lamented over him in these words, "My dear Gregory, I would to God I were where thou art." So strong was the power of conscience still in this unhappy archbishop! But Gregory recovered, and was preserved by Providence to be a nursing-father to the church to a very advanced age.

The brethren, hearing of the sensibility discovered by Rokyzan, addressed themselves to him again; but his answers were of the same kind as formerly. He was

* It is not easy to give a regular account of these transactions according to the order of time. There is, I find, some diversity in this respect between the two authors whom I follow. But I retain the substance of the narrative, collected from both.

† Joachim Camer. p. 85.

‡ Id. p. 80.

determined not to suffer persecution; and they, in their farewell letter, said to him, with more zeal than discretion, "Thou art of the world, and wilt perish with the world." The persecution now took a different turn; the Hussites were no longer tortured, but were driven out of the country; whence they were obliged to hide themselves in mountains and woods, and to live in the wilderness. In this situation, in the year 1467 they came to a resolution to form a church among themselves, and to appoint their own ministers. In 1480 they received a great increase of their numbers from the accession of Waldensian refugees, who escaped out of Austria, where Stephen, the last bishop of the Waldenses in that province, was burnt alive, and where the vehemence of persecution no longer allowed this people to live in security. An union was easily formed between the Waldenses and the Hussites, on account of the similarity of their sentiments and manners. The refugees, however, found their situation but little meliorated by a junction with a people who were obliged to conceal themselves in thickets and in clefts of rocks; and who, to escape detection by the smoke, made no fires, except in the night, when they read the word of God, and prayed. What they must have suffered in these circumstances, may be easily conceived. The death of king Podiebrad, in 1471, had afforded them, indeed, some relief; and about the same time had died also the unhappy Rokyzan, who, in his latter days, promoted the persecutions against them, and who expired in despair.

Expulsion of
the Hussite
brethren, in
A. D. 1467.

Union be-
tween the
Hussites and
the Walden-
ses, in
A. D. 1480.

Death of
Podiebrad,
A. D. 1471.

In 1481 the Hussites were banished Moravia, but returned into that country six years afterwards. In the beginning of the sixteenth century, they counted two hundred congregations in Bohemia and Moravia. Their most violent persecutors were the Calixtines, who certainly for the most part resembled the papists in all things, except in the particularity from which their names were derived.

The Hus-
sites were
banished
Moravia in
A. D. 1481.

And here I close, for the present, the history of the Hussites, who doubtless, as a body of men, feared God

and served him in the Gospel of his Son. They also maintained a degree of discipline among themselves vastly superior to that of any others of the Christian name, unless we except the churches of the Waldenses. Both of these, however, were defective in evangelical LIGHT. There wanted an exhibition of the pure doctrines of Christ, luminous, attractive, and powerful, which should publish peace and salvation to mankind through the cross of Christ, and engage the attention of the serious and thoughtful, who knew not the way of peace. These could find little instruction or consolation in the view of a society of Christians, whose manners indeed were pure and holy, but in the eyes of the ignorant forbidding and austere. God in his mercy was now hastening this exhibition by the light of the Reformation, which, after we have very briefly surveyed the fifteenth century in GENERAL, must engage our attention.

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that the plan of this History will require, that the account of THE UNITED BRETHREN be hereafter resumed, and their internal principles and regulations, as well as their external connexions and persecutions, examined with care and diligence, and stated with candour and fidelity.

CHAP. IV.

A BRIEF VIEW OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

THE most remarkable events which distinguish this period in general history, appear to have been directed by Divine Providence with a particular subserviency to the Reformation. Only in this view they will deserve the notice of the historian of the church of Christ. In the year 1453, Constantinople was taken by the Turkish emperor Mahomet II. From the year 1299, when the four angels were loosed, which had been bound in the river Euphrates*, that is to say, when four Turkish sultanies were established in the East, the Turks had gradually increased their power, and filled the world with carnage and confusion.

Constantino-
ple taken by
Mahomet II.
A. D. 1453.

* Rev. ix. 14.

In the mean time, the princes of Europe, absorbed in the vortex of narrow and contracted politics, indolently beheld these ferocious barbarians advancing further and further to the West, and formed no generous plan of defensive combination. It was in vain that the distressed emperors of the East implored the aid of the Western princes. The common enemy OVERFLOWED AND PASSED OVER,—to use the prophetic language of Daniel,—and having once gained a footing in Europe, he continued to domineer over a large part of Christendom, and to desolate the nations. The same unerring spirit of prophecy which foretold these amazing scenes by St. John, foretold also the continued obduracy and impenitence of the nominal Christians. They repented not of their idolatry and practical wickedness*.

There cannot be a more melancholy contemplation, than to observe the infatuation of nations, who have provoked God to forsake them. Though the voice of Providence is addressed to their senses, they consider not the works of the Lord, and at the same time seem to be as destitute of political sagacity as they are of religious principle. This fifteenth century affords an awful instance of these things. The Turks oppressed Europe with persevering cruelty; but Europe neither humbled itself before God, nor took any measures to check the ambition of the Mahometans. The Sovereign of the Universe, however, was bringing order out of confusion, and light out of darkness. The learned men, who emigrated from Greece, revived the study of letters in Europe, and paved the way for that light of classical erudition, which was one of the most powerful of all those subordinate means which were employed in the demolition of idolatry and superstition. By a surprising concurrence of circumstances, the noble art of printing was invented about the year 1440†. Learning was cultivated with incredible ardour: the family of the Medici was raised up to patronize science; and toward the end of this same century, Erasmus arose, whose good sense, taste, and industry, were uncommonly serviceable to the Reformation. By his labours, monastic superstition received a wound which has never since been

* Rev. ix. 21.

† Mosheim, vol. I. p 764.

healed ; and learned men were furnished with critical skill and ingenuity, of which they failed not to avail themselves in the instruction of mankind to a degree beyond what Erasmus himself had ever conceived.

Thus, under the care of Divine Providence, materials were collected for that beautiful edifice which began to be erected in the next century. In the fifteenth century, the great value and benefit of these materials scarcely appeared ; the same corruptions both of faith and of practice, which have so often been described, still prevailed in all their horrors.

In the mean time there were some individuals, who, though not connected with any particular Christian societies, evidenced the power of godliness. Among these, Thomas Rhedon, a Frenchman and a Carmelite friar, was distinguished*. This man came to Rome with the Venetian ambassadors, having undertaken this journey in the hope of improving his understanding in religious concerns. He had hitherto no conception of the enormous corruptions of that venal city, and was therefore astonished to find that even the habitation of St. Peter was become a den of thieves. His zealous spirit was stirred up in him, to give an open testimony to evangelical truth ; and at length by continual preaching he incurred the hatred of the ruling powers. In fine, he was degraded from the priesthood, and was burnt four years after his arrival at Rome, in the year 1436, during the pontificate of Eugenius, the successor of that same Martin who was raised to the popedom by the council of Constance. Several others, who like him were enlightened, and like him were faithful to their God, though unconnected with any particular church, were executed in Germany, not long after the burning of John Huss.

Martyrdom
of Thomas
Rhedon,
A. D. 1436.

Jerom Savanarola, an Italian monk, by his zeal, learning, and piety, incurred in an eminent manner the hatred of the court of Rome. Notwithstanding the repeated menaces of the pope, he continued to preach the word of God with great vehemence, and with a degree of light and knowledge, which seems superior to that of most, if not of all men,

Savanarola,
Dominic, &
Silvester,
preach the
Gospel at
Florence, in
A. D. 1496.

* Fox, Vol. I. p. 758.

in that age. In 1496 he upheld the standard of the Gospel at Florence, though many warned him of the danger to which he was exposed by his great boldness. At length, in the year 1498*, he and two other friars, named Dominic and Silvester, were imprisoned. During his confinement, he wrote a spiritual meditation on the thirty-first psalm, in which he described the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, a subject peculiarly evangelical, and which needs some real exercise of practical godliness, in order to be duly understood and relished by mankind. The pope's legates arriving at Florence, Jerom and his two companions were charged with maintaining various heretical opinions, one of which deserves to be distinctly mentioned, as characteristic of the times in which they lived. For example, they were accused, in explicit terms, of having preached the doctrine of free justification through faith in Christ; and after they had persevered in what was called an obstinate heresy, they were degraded, delivered to the secular power at Florence, and burnt to death in the year 1499.

They are
burnt,
A. D. 1499.

There were also some souls who in secret served God in the Gospel of his Son; and who knew what spirituality in religion meant, though from some particular circumstances they never were exposed to suffer in any considerable degree for righteousness' sake. Among these was the famous Thomas à Kempis, who died in 1471†. Instead of entering into the tedious dispute concerning the author of the well known book of "The Imitation of Jesus Christ," let us be content with ascribing it to this monk, its reputed author. It would be impertinent in me to enter into any detail of a performance so familiar to religious readers; and let it suffice to say, that it abounds with the most pious and devotional sentiments, and could not have been written but by one well versed in Christian experience, though it partakes of the common defect of monastic writers; that is to say, it does not sufficiently illustrate the doctrine of justification by faith.

Death of
Thomas à
Kempis,
A. D. 1471.

Vincent Ferrer, though bred in the midst of darkness, and connected with the worst of ecclesiastical characters,

* Fox, p. 830.

† Du Pin.

was a shining model of piety*. He was born at Valentia in Spain, became a Dominican friar, and a zealous preacher of the word of God. A quotation from his book on Spiritual Life will deserve the attention of students. "Do you desire to study to advantage? Consult God more than books, and ask him humbly to make you understand what you read. Study drains the mind and heart. Go from time to time to be refreshed at the feet of Christ under his cross. Some moments of repose there give fresh vigour and new light: interrupt your study by short, but fervent ejaculations. Science is the gift of the Father of lights. Do not consider it as attainable, merely by the work of your own mind or industry." This holy person was retained in the service of Peter de Luna, who, as pope, took the name of Benedict XIII. and was one of those three popes that were deposed by the council of Constance. Very few men are represented in history to have been of a more proud and deceitful character than Peter de Luna. Vincent entreated his master to resign his dignity. Benedict rather artfully eluded, than directly refused the request. Bishoprics and a cardinal's hat were then offered to Vincent; but his heart was insensible to the charms of worldly honours and dignities. He very earnestly wished to become an apostolic missionary; and, in this respect, he was at length gratified by Benedict. At the age of forty-two he began to preach with great fervour in every town from Avignon towards Valentia. His word is said to have been powerful among the Jews, the Mahometans, and others. After he had laboured in Spain, France, and Italy, he then, at the desire of Henry IV. king of England, exerted himself in the same manner throughout the chief towns of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Still finding Peter de Luna entirely obstinate in his ambition, he renounced his service, and, by the desire of king Henry V. made Normandy and Brittany the theatre of his labours during the last two years of his life. He died at the age of sixty-two.

How truly humble this man was, appears from the whole of this little account which I can collect concern-

* Butler, Vol. IV.

ing him; and particularly, from his own confession; "My whole life is a sink of iniquity; I am all infection; I am corruption throughout. I feel this to be so more and more. Whoever is proud, shall stand without. Christ manifests his truth to the lowly, and hides himself from the proud."

Antoninus, archbishop of Florence, born in the year 1389, seems to have been a similar character*. Great things are related of his pastoral labours and services. His secretary, observing his indefatigable exertions, once said to him, "The life of a bishop is truly pitiable, if he is doomed to live in such a constant hurry as you live." "To enjoy inward peace," replied he, "we must, amidst all our affairs, ever reserve a closet as it were in our hearts, where we are to remain retired within ourselves, and where no worldly business can enter." He died aged seventy; and is said to have frequently repeated, in his last moments, words which he had been accustomed to use in the time of his health; namely, "To serve God is to reign."

Pastoral labours of Antoninus, archbishop of Florence.

Died at 70.

Bernardin †, of the republic of Sienna, was born in the year 1380, and on account of his uncommon zeal in preaching, was called "The Burning Coal." He gave this advice to clergymen: "Seek first the kingdom of God; and the Holy Ghost will give you a wisdom, which no adversary can withstand." This excellent man expressed an earnest wish to be able to cry out with a trumpet through the world, "How long will ye love simplicity?" He died aged sixty-three years.

Bernardin of Sienna.

John de Wesalia was a doctor of divinity of the fifteenth century.

John de Wesalia.

1. He taught doctrines which much displeased the catholics.

2. The archbishop of Mentz prosecuted him: John was imprisoned, and an assembly of popish doctors were convened to sit in judgment upon him in 1479.

3. He made a public recantation of his doctrines; but nevertheless was condemned to a perpetual penance in a monastery of the Augustine friars, where he died soon after.

* Butler, Vol. V.

† Ibid.

The protestants have certainly ranked him in the catalogue of the witnesses to the truth ; but there may be a question, whether his principles and his practice, taken together, entitle him to a place in this History ? Very little is known concerning him, except from his examination before the German inquisitors, who most undoubtedly treated him with great harshness and severity.

By one author he appears to have been considered as an eminent Christian ; but this is the judgment of a person who shows himself on all occasions extremely attached to Calvinistic tenets, and who has no mercy on Arminians. And if, for the sake of brevity, I may be allowed the use of the words Calvinist and Arminian, as being terms well understood at this day, John de Wesalia was certainly a most rigid Calvinist.

A long catalogue of charges were brought against him, from which it may be proper to select a few for the reader's perusal.

1. From everlasting, God hath written a book wherein he hath inscribed all his elect ; and whosoever is not already written there, will never be written there at all. Moreover,

2. He that is written therein will never be blotted out.

3. The elect are saved by the grace of God alone ; and what man soever God willeth to save, by enduing him with grace, if all the priests in the world were desirous to damn and excommunicate that man, he would still be saved. Whomsoever likewise God willeth to damn, he would still be damned, though the presbyters, the pope and others were willing to save him.

4. If there had never been any pope in the world, they who are saved, would have been saved. The pope, and bishops and priests contribute nothing to salvation : concord alone, and peace among men, and a peaceable way of living, are sufficient.

5. Christ never appointed any particular fasts, nor forbid the use of flesh meat on any day.

6. If St. Peter appointed fasts, perhaps he did so for the purpose of having a better sale for his fish.

7. The holy oil is the very same as the oil which you eat at home.

8. The Scriptures do not say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son.

9. Those who undertake pilgrimages to Rome, are fools.

10. I consider nothing as sinful, which the Scriptures have not declared to be so.

11. I despise the pope and his councils. I love Christ; and may his word dwell in us abundantly!

12. It is a difficult thing to be a Christian.

13. Indulgences are nothing.

It was further objected to him, in the course of his examination, that he had given it as his opinion, that St. Paul contributed nothing towards his conversion by his own free-will.

This account might lead us to suspect, that there was something of a spirit of levity in the disposition of John de Wesalia. He seems to have seen clearly through several of the popish superstitions, and to have exposed them with zeal and freedom. Charity will certainly incline us to hope the best; nevertheless the Christian reader cannot but wish there had been greater marks of personal contrition of soul and of true humility at the cross of Christ. However, it ought not to be omitted, that John was an old man, and bowed down with infirmities and disorders of long standing; and therefore he was probably not able to recollect what he had formerly advanced, or to express his thoughts distinctly before such a formidable tribunal of Inquisitors. Fear compelled him at last to retract; but in the course of his trial, he had the spirit to say to the court, "If Christ were now present, and ye were to treat him as ye do me, HE might be condemned by you as a heretic. However," the old man added with a smile, "HE would get the better of you by his acuteness*."

JOHN WESSELUS of Groningen has sometimes been taken for the same person as the preceding John de Wesalia. And no wonder; for besides the similarity of their names, they lived about the same time, and both of them opposed several of the errors and corruptions of popery.

John Wes-
selus, of
Groningen.

* Fascic. rer. vol. i. & Bayle, Crit. Dict.

Wesselus, however, is incomparably the superior character in every respect. He was one of the most learned men of the fifteenth century, and was so celebrated for his talents and attainments, as to have been de-

Born

A. D. 1419; nominated THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

Died

He was born about the year 1419, not in 1400, A. D. 1489. as some have supposed. He died in 1489.

Whatever doubts may be entertained respecting the genuine seriousness and solidity of John de Wesalia, the extraordinary religious knowledge of Wesselus, and his truly Christian spirit, are indisputable. He has been justly called the Forerunner of Luther.

That great Reformer was so astonished when he first met with some pieces of the composition of Wesselus, that in the Leipsic edition of 1522, he wrote a preface to the work, in which he says*, “By the wonderful providence of God, I have been compelled to become a public man, and to fight battles with those monsters of indulgences and papal decrees. All along I supposed myself to stand alone; yet have I preserved so much animation in the contest, as to be every where accused of heat and violence, and of biting too hard. However, the truth is, I have earnestly wished to have done with these followers of Baal among whom my lot is cast, and to live quietly in some corner; for I have utterly despaired of making any impression on these brazen foreheads, and iron necks of impiety.

“But behold, in this state of mind, I am told that even in these days, there is in secret a remnant of the people of God. Nay, I am not only told so, but I rejoice to see a proof of it. Here is a new publication by Wesselus of Groningen, a man of an admirable genius, and of an uncommonly enlarged mind. It is very plain he was taught of God, as Isaiah prophesied that Christians should be†: And as in my own case, so with him, it cannot be supposed that he received his doctrines from men. If I had read his works before, my enemies might have supposed that I had learnt every thing from Wesselus, such a perfect coincidence there is in our opinions. As to myself, I not only derive pleasure, but strength and courage from

* Ep. II. p. 89.

† Isaiah liv. 13.

this publication. It is now impossible for me to doubt whether I am right in the points which I have inculcated, when I see so entire an agreement in sentiment, and almost the same words used by this eminent person, who lived in a different age, in a distant country, and in circumstances very unlike my own. I am surprised that this excellent Christian writer should be so little known. The reason may be, either that he lived without blood and contention (for this is the only thing in which he differs from me); or perhaps the Jews of our times have suppressed his writings as heretical.

“I recommend it therefore to the pious reader, to peruse this book with care and consideration. The writer peculiarly excels in judgment; and moreover he is admirably calculated to improve the judgment of his reader. Lastly, those who are displeased with my asperity, will meet with nothing of that sort, in Wesselus, to offend them.”

A complete edition of the works of Wesselus was published in 1614, with a short account of his life, by Albert Hardenberg. The book is in quarto, and contains about nine hundred pages, and is extremely scarce.

It is only a small part of his writings to which Luther's address to the reader is prefixed; but the subjects are very important. For example: 1. On the kind providence of God. 2. On the causes, the mysteries, and the effects of our Lord's incarnation and sufferings. 3. On the nature of ecclesiastical power; and the degree of that obligation which men are under to obey the rulers of the church. 4. On the sacrament of repentance, and the keys of the church. 5. On the true communion of saints. 6. On purgatory, and on indulgences.

If the treatises of Wesselus had fallen in the way of the Author of this History, the Editor is persuaded he would have been both delighted and surprised to find that so much Christian light and wisdom existed in the middle of the fifteenth century; and would probably have given much larger extracts from this eminent divine, than can now be conveniently introduced into the fourth volume. It is true that his writings are considerably tarnished with popish errors and superstitions; but still the wonder is, that of these blemishes there are not many more and much

greater. In general, he appears to have seen quite as far as Luther saw, about the years 1518 and 1519. In regard to purgatory, his notion seems to have been, that it was a place of purification, but not of punishment.

I know not whether Luther ever saw the more elaborate writings of this truly great man. They are extremely practical, and very sound.

1. There are eleven chapters, taking up 184 pages, on the nature and management of prayer. Here the writer follows the order of the clauses in the Lord's prayer; and explains them with a simplicity and copiousness of language, and an originality of thought that has rarely been exceeded in any age.

2. The second treatise, which is somewhat longer, is grave and useful throughout. The author calls it, Rules for Meditation, or Directions for fixing the Mind in its Contemplations, and for restraining irregular Thoughts. From the case of Mary and Martha*, he takes occasion, in the first part, to make a comparison between busy and quiet scenes, between an active and a contemplative life. The rules laid down in the rest of this performance, though they savour a little of the taste of the times, in being formal and artificial, display nevertheless both great powers of intellect and an extensive erudition. Every line breathes a spirit of piety and devotion. But the depth of the writer's religious thoughts and the warmth of his spiritual affections are most evident in the EXAMPLES which he subjoins, with a view to illustrate his rules for meditation: and these he takes good care to support by appropriate quotations from Scripture.

3. But the work of Wesselus, which is most solid and important, and which seems to have called forth the greatest exercises both of his head and his heart, is, An Inquiry into the reasons of the humiliation of Christ in his incarnation and bitter pains.—This subject is briefly touched upon in the aforementioned small miscellaneous publication of 1522; but in the edition of 1614 it is again handled with uncommon ability, and to the comprehensive extent of twenty chapters on the incarnation, and fourscore chapters on the greatness and the severity of our Lord's sufferings.

* Luke x.

It is not possible to communicate a clear idea of the author's manner of treating these mysterious and fundamental points of religion, without transcribing a large part of his compositions. Suffice it to say, that he is in general so perfectly orthodox, and has so clear an insight into the essential doctrines of Christianity, that it would not be easy to point out any material difference between Wesselus and the Church of England in most articles of the greatest consequence. The fall of man, repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, justification by faith only, and sanctification by the Spirit, are the revealed truths which are constantly before his eyes. And it may seem not a little remarkable, that he should have understood perfectly how to reconcile the apparent contradictions between St. Paul and St. James in the matter of justification. "There is not," says he, "the smallest disagreement between these Apostles. They concur in one common sentiment, That the just shall live by a faith which worketh by love. It is not by works that our natural body is proved to be alive! If there be no signs of pulse, no respiration, no warmth about the præcordia, in short, if there be no vital actions whatever, do we not pronounce the body to be dead? These actions are the proper proof that it is alive; yet they are not the CAUSE of its life. The soul, which is the source of these actions, is the cause of life: further, the more in number, vigour, and excellence these actions are, the more thoroughly we say that body is alive. So in spiritual things. The LOVE of Christ is the noblest and most excellent of the intellectual affections; and, in this our mortal course, it is the strongest proof of life in the soul of the Christian. Moreover, love may exist even though the person sits still; does nothing; meddles not with external matters, as Martha did; but sees and tastes how sweet the Lord is, as Mary saw and tasted when she obtained the part that was not to be taken from her. But mark, there must be a PRINCIPLE of love, otherwise the actions of the lover will not be accepted. FAITH is that principle; and hence it is that faith is accepted on account of its productive nature. Now, where there is no operation of this sort, St. James pronounces the faith to be dead: And St. Paul

in nowise opposes that sentiment, when he says that a man is justified by the faith of Christ without works. However, this is not to be understood as though the faith of a true believer produced the righteousness of an angel; no: the man is justified for this reason, because it has pleased God to BESTOW on the believer a righteousness superior to that of an angel, namely, the satisfaction of Christ, the great High Priest. Hence also, no religious exercise contributes more to a true justification, than frequent meditation on our Lord's passion, with a commemoration of the same. It is an exercise of faith, in which the believer's object is to become partaker of the benefits of Christ's sacrifice; and in that spirit, he confesses his sins, longs for deliverance, wishes, waits, sits at the feet of Jesus, and, like Mary, chooses the better part: Such a faith, the more vigorous it is in believing, commemorating, tasting, hungering and thirsting; and the more ardent it is in producing spiritual breathings and desires, the more completely will it apply to the conscience the blood of the High Priest, and thereby justify the sinner.—And here, may we not be allowed to ask, whether the man who thus believes, desires, wishes, and prays, can properly be said to produce no works?"

But we must not dissemble that sometimes, among very fine and beautiful sentiments, the exuberant imagination of this venerable divine leads him to advance positions, which, if not absolutely contrary to Scripture, are neither warranted by it, nor capable of being proved by reason. An instance of this sort may be found, I think, in his seventh chapter, on the reasons of the incarnation of our Lord. He there maintains, that the Word, the second person of the Trinity, would have taken upon him our nature, even though man had not sinned. But it will be unnecessary to take up the reader's time with the subtle, abstruse, inconclusive arguments which he makes use of on this occasion.

I have much less objection to the manner in which he inquires (Chap. 65, on the great sufferings of our Lord), Whether Peter, in denying Christ, so fell as to lose all spiritual life? At the same time, I pretend not to determine how far it may be either safe or laudable to indulge our curiosity in prying into questions of this nature.

It is true, says he, Peter denied him thrice ; yet who can doubt but that he nevertheless retained in his heart a sincere love for his master through the whole of that most trying and tempestuous season, and especially after that kind look of Jesus, which I verily believe awakened his gratitude, and produced those undeniable proofs of affection, viz. his bitter, penitential tears ? I wish, continues this good man, that I had as much love for the Lord Jesus, even now, in these quiet times, as Peter had when he cursed and swore and denied his master. I should then certainly conclude myself to be a living member of Christ, and indeed much more alive, than I can now pretend to be. Further, in my opinion, Peter at that time had much more spiritual life than many persons in our days have, who yet are truly religious.

To some persons it may seem extraordinary, that a man, whose life was so uniformly and so eminently Christian, should have been harassed in his last illness with doubts concerning the truth of revealed religion. The friend to whom he owned the uneasiness and perplexity of his mind, was prodigiously surprised, and exhorted Wesselus to direct all his thoughts to Christ, the only Saviour. This admonition did not seem to please him at the moment ; and his friend retired, deeply afflicted. A short time after, the same friend returned, and Wesselus, with all the joy and satisfaction that could be expressed by one in his weak condition, cried out, “God be praised ! all those vain doubtings are fled ; and now all I know, is Jesus Christ and him crucified.”—He then resigned his soul to God.

Two reasons may be given, why Wesselus was not crushed in that storm of persecution which in the year 1479 broke out upon his friend and contemporary, John de Wesalia :

1. David of Burgundy, then bishop of Utrecht, is said to have loved and protected him.
2. His reputation both for learning and piety was at a great height.

Pope Sixtus IV. immediately after his inauguration at Rome, told Wesselus that he would grant him any request he should make. Wesselus answered thus : Holy

Father and kind patron, I shall not press hard upon your holiness. You well know I never aimed at great things. But as you now sustain the character of the supreme pontiff and shepherd on earth, my request is, that you would so discharge the duties of your elevated station, that your praise may correspond with your dignity, and that when the Great Shepherd shall appear, whose first minister you are, he may say, Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord : And moreover, that you may be able to say boldly, Lord, thou gavest me five talents, behold I have gained five other talents.

The pope replied, That must be my care ; But do you ask something for yourself. Then, rejoined Wesselus, I beg you to give me out of the Vatican library a Greek and a Hebrew Bible. You shall have them, said Sixtus : But, foolish man, why don't you ask for a bishopric, or something of that sort ? For the best of reasons, said Wesselus, because I do not want such things*.

The pious student cannot fail to be interested in this account of a very eminent Christian, so very little known.—And here we shall conclude our review of the Fifteenth Century.

C E N T U R Y XVI.

CHAP. I.

THE REFORMATION UNDER THE CONDUCT OF LUTHER.

PRELIMINARIES.

THE Sixteenth Century opened with a prospect of all others the most gloomy, in the eyes of every true Christian. Corruption both in doctrine and in practice had exceeded all bounds ; and the general face of Europe, though the name of Christ was every where professed, presented nothing that was properly Evangelical. Great efforts indeed had been made to emancipate the Church from the “ powers of darkness ;” and in consequence

* Vita Wess. ab Hardenb.

many individual souls had been conducted into the path of salvation. Still nothing like a general reformation had taken place in any part of Europe. For it must be confessed, that the labours of Claudius of Turin, of the Waldensian Barbs, of Wickliff, and of Huss, had not been sufficiently directed against the predominant corruptions in doctrine, though the practical abuses of the popedom had been opposed with ingenuous freedom and disinterested courage. The external branches only, rather than the bitter root itself, which supported all the evils of false religion, being attacked, no permanent or extensive change had ensued. The Waldenses were too feeble to molest the popedom; and the Hussites, divided among themselves and worn out by a long series of contentions, were reduced to silence. Among both were found persons of undoubted godliness, but they appeared incapable of making effectual impressions on the kingdom of Antichrist. The Roman pontiffs were still the uncontrolled patrons of impiety. Neither the scandalous crimes of Alexander VI. nor the military ferocity of Julius II. (pontiffs whose actions it is impertinent to the plan of this history to detail), seem to have lessened the dominion of the court of Rome, or to have opened the eyes of men so as to induce them to make a sober investigation of the nature of true religion.

But not many years after the commencement of this century, the world beheld an attempt to restore the light of the Gospel, more evangelically judicious, more simply founded on the word of God, and more ably and more successfully conducted, than any which had ever been seen since the days of Augustine. MARTIN LUTHER, whom Divine Providence raised up for this purpose, was evidently the instrument rather than the agent of this reformation. He was led from step to step, by a series of circumstances, far beyond his original intentions; and in a manner which might evince the excellency of the power to be of God and not of man*. Even the reformations which took place in several other parts of Europe, besides Germany, the scene of Luther's transactions, were in a great measure derived from the light which he was

* 2 Cor. iv. 7.

enabled to diffuse among mankind. And as the peculiar excellency of the revival of godliness now before us lay in this, that it was conversant in fundamentals of doctrine, rather than in correction of mere abuses of practice, hence the history of Lutheranism recommends itself in an especial manner to the study of every theologian.

That I may be able to furnish the reader with a clear and satisfactory view of this important part of ecclesiastical history, I shall particularly avail myself of the labours of the learned Seckendorf, who published a Latin translation of Maimbourg's* History, and who, in a diffusive comment, often corrected and refuted it, and at the same time supplied from the very best materials whatever might be wanted to illustrate the progress of Lutheranism. The authentic documents derived from the archives of the royal house of Saxe Gotha, and the original papers of Luther, Melancthon, and other reformers, are largely quoted by this author. He adverts also continually to the opposite accounts of the Romish writers. In fine, he seems to have examined all the best sources of information on this subject, and to have placed before his readers, whatever might be needful to inform their judgments. I follow Seckendorf therefore as my principal guide, yet not exclusively ; I also make use of Father Paul, of Du Pin, of Sleidan, Thuanus, &c. &c. The merely modern writers, who too commonly treat these interesting matters in a superficial manner, content with elegance of style, and an indulgence to the popular taste, afford little service towards the execution of my plan.

In a manuscript history, extending from the year 1524 to 1541, composed by Frederic Myconius, a very able coadjutor of Luther and Melancthon, the author describes the state of religion in the beginning of this century in striking terms. "The passion and satisfaction of Christ, were treated as a bare history, like the Odyssey of Homer: concerning faith, by which the righteousness of the Redeemer and eternal life are apprehended, there was the deepest silence : Christ was described as a severe judge, ready to condemn all who were † destitute of the

* Louis Maimbourg, a learned Jesuit, wrote celebrated histories of Calvinism, Lutheranism, Arianism, &c. &c. † Seckendorf, Vol. I. p. 4.

intercession of saints, and of pontifical interest. In the room of Christ were substituted, as saviours and intercessors, the Virgin Mary, like a Pagan Diana, and other saints, who from time to time had been created by the popes. Nor were men, it seems, entitled to the benefit of their prayers, except they deserved it of them by their works. What sort of works was necessary for this end was distinctly explained; not the works prescribed in the Decalogue, and enjoined on all mankind, but such as enriched the priests and monks. Those who died neglecting these, were consigned to hell, or at least to purgatory, till they were redeemed from it by a satisfaction made either by themselves or by their proxies. The frequent pronunciation of the Lord's prayer and the salutation of the Virgin, and the recitations of the canonical hours, constantly engaged those who undertook to be religious. An incredible mass of ceremonious observances was every where visible; while gross wickedness was practised under the encouragement of indulgences, by which the guilt of the crimes was easily expiated. The preaching of the word was the least part of the episcopal function: rites and processions employed the bishops perpetually, when engaged in religious exercises. The number of clergy was enormous, and their lives were most scandalous. I speak of those whom I have known in the town of Gothen," &c. If we add to this the testimony of Pellicanus, another of Luther's followers, "that a Greek Testament could not be procured at any price in all Germany*," what can be wanting to complete the picture of that darkness in which men lived, and in what did the Christian nations differ from Pagans, except in the name? It may be proper to mention, that even the university of Paris, the first of all the famous schools of learning, could not furnish a single person capable of supporting a controversy against Luther on the foundation of Scripture. And scarcely any Christian doctor in the beginning of this century had a critical knowledge of the word of God. The reader may find it useful to be detained a little longer in contemplating the situation of the Christian world at the time of Luther's appearance. The observations I

* Seckendorf, Vol. I. p. 132.

have to offer for this purpose shall be arranged under four distinct heads ; and they will, I trust, assist us in demonstrating the importance of the Reformation, and fully evince that the difference between popery and protestantism is not merely verbal.

1. The popish doctrine of indulgences was then in the highest reputation. We shall be in no danger of misrepresenting this doctrine, if we state it according to the ideas of one of the ablest champions of popery*. The church, he tells us, imposes painful works or sufferings on offenders ; which, being discharged or undergone with humility, are called satisfactions ; and when, regarding the fervor of the penitents, or other good works, she remits some part of the task, this is called "an indulgence." For he pretends that the infinite satisfaction of Christ may be applied in two ways, either by entire remission, without the reservation of any punishment, or by the changing of a greater punishment into a less. "The first," he says, "is done in baptism, the second in the case of sins committed after baptism." And here he gives us the authority of the council of Trent to support his assertion, namely, "The power to grant indulgences has been committed to the church by Jesus Christ, and the use of them is beneficial to salvation." Those, he observes, who depart this life indebted to divine justice for some of the pains reserved, must suffer them in another life in the state of purgatory.

Reliefs are however provided in this case also ; the benefit of indulgences extends, it seems, beyond the grave, and the doctrine of commutation for offences, applied in real practice by the friends of the deceased, was held to be valid in heaven. The foundation of all this system was generally believed to be this : There was supposed to be an infinite treasure of merit in Christ and the saints, which was abundantly more than sufficient for themselves. Thus, what is strictly true of the Divine Saviour, was asserted also of saints, namely, that they had done works of supererogation. This treasure was deposited in the church, under the conduct of the See of Rome, and was

* Bossuet, bishop of Meaux, in an Exposition of the Doctrine of the Catholic Church in matters of Controversy.

sold, literally sold for money, at that see's discretion, to those who were able and willing to pay for it; and few were found willing to undergo the course of a severe penance of unpleasant austerities, when they could afford to commute for it by pecuniary payments. The popes, and under them the bishops and the clergy, particularly the Dominican and Franciscan friars, had the disposition of this treasure; and as the pontiffs had the power of canonizing new saints at their own will, the fund was ever growing; and so long as the system could maintain its credit, the riches of their church, thus secularized under the appearance of religion, became a sea without a shore. No impartial examiner of authentic records will say, that I have overcharged this account of indulgences. In fact, these were the symptoms of the last stage of papal depravity; and as the moral evils which they encouraged were plain to every one not totally destitute of discernment, they were the first objects assaulted by the Reformers.

2. But the views of those wise and holy personages were far more extensive. They saw, that a practice so scandalously corrupt, was connected with the grossest ignorance of the nature of Gospel-grace. The doctrine of justification, in its explicit form, had been lost for many ages to the Christian world. If men had really believed, that by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ salvation was obtained, and that God "justifies the ungodly" through faith alone, how could they have been imposed on by the traffic of indulgences? In whatever manner the papist might subtilize and divide, he was compelled by his system to hold, that by a compliance with the rules of the church, either in the way of indulgences, or by some severer mode, pardon was to be obtained; and that the satisfaction of Christ was not sufficiently meritorious for this end; in other words, that the gift of God is not eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord*. And in fact, the preachers of indulgences, whether popes themselves or their ministers, held out to the people with sufficient clearness, that the inheritance of eternal life was to be purchased by indulgences. Proofs of this have already appeared in the course of this History, and more will be

* See Rom. vi. end.

given hereafter. The testimony of Sleidan, one of the most judicious and dispassionate historians, to the nature of indulgences, well deserves to be transcribed in this place. It is contained in the beginning of his excellent history. "Pope Leo X. making use of that power, which his predecessors had usurped over all Christian churches, sent abroad into all kingdoms his letters and bulls, with ample promises of the full pardon of sins, and of eternal salvation to such as would purchase the same with money!!!" Even when the traffic of indulgences was checked by the pontiffs, as being carried on in too gross a manner, no clear account was given in what the abuse consisted. In fine, it was evident, that no reformation could take place through the medium of qualifying and correcting abuses of this traffic. The system itself was wholly impious, and the right knowledge of justification was the only remedy adequate to the evil. This, therefore, the reader is to look for, as the most capital object of the Reformation: and thus, in the demolition of one of the vilest perversions of superstition, there suddenly arose and revived, in all its infant simplicity, that Apostolical doctrine, in which is contained the great mystery of the Scriptures.

3. The state of mankind at that time was peculiarly adapted to the reception of so rich a display of Gospel-grace. God sent a plentiful rain, whereby he refreshed his inheritance, when it was weary*. Men were then bound fast in fetters of iron: their whole religion was one enormous mass of bondage. Terrors beset them on every side; and the fiction of purgatory was ever teeming with ghosts and apparitions. Persons truly serious, and such there ever were and will be, because there ever was and will be a true church on earth, were so clouded in their understandings by the prevailing corruptions of the hierarchy, that they could find no access to God by Jesus Christ. The road of simple faith, grounded on the divine promises, connected always with real humility, and always productive of hearty and grateful obedience, was stopped up with briars and thorns. No certain rest could be afforded to the weary mind, and a state of doubt, of

* Ps. lxviii. 9.

allowed doubt and anxiety, was recommended by the papal system. What a joyful doctrine then was that of the real Gospel, of remission of sins through Christ alone, received by faith! a doctrine, which is indeed to be found every where in the Scriptures; but the Scriptures were almost unknown among the people at the beginning of the Reformation.

4. Should the philosophical sceptic, or the pharisaical formalist, express his surprise, that I should lay so great a stress on the Christian article of Justification, and wonder that any person should ever be at a loss to discover the way of obtaining true peace of conscience; it may be useful towards satisfying his scruples, to remind such a character of a FOURTH mark of corruption, which much prevailed in the times previous to the Reformation. This is, the predominance of the Aristotelian philosophy in Europe at that period, a philosophy which knew nothing of original sin and native depravity, which allowed nothing to be criminal but certain external flagitious actions, and which was unacquainted with the idea of any righteousness of grace, imputed to a sinner. How many in this age, who neither know nor value Aristotle, do yet altogether follow his self-righteous notions of religion! These are congenial to our fallen nature, and are incapable, while they prevail in the mind, of administering any cure to papal bondage, except that which is worse than the disease itself. They tend to lead men into the depths of Atheistic profaneness. But the person whom God raised up particularly at this time to instruct an ignorant world, was most remarkably eminent for self-knowledge. Only characters of this sort are qualified to inform mankind in subjects of the last importance towards the attainment of their eternal happiness. LUTHER knew himself; and he knew also the scriptural grounds on which he stood in his controversies with the ecclesiastical rulers. His zeal was disinterested, his courage undaunted. Accordingly, when he had once erected the standard of Truth, he continued to uphold it with an unconquerable intrepidity, which merits the gratitude and esteem of all succeeding ages.

C H A P. II.

THE BEGINNING OF THE CONTROVERSY CONCERNING
INDULGENCES.

POPE Alexander VI. the most flagitious of men, died in the year 1503. After the short interval of the dominion of Pius III. who ruled the Church less than a year, Julius II. was elected pontiff. A circumstance attended this election which deserves to be recorded* as a memorable indication of those times. The cardinals agreed upon oath before the election, and obliged the new pontiff after his election to take the same oath, that a general council should be called within two years, to reform the Church. The effect of this measure, which so strongly implied the consent of the Christian world to the necessity of a reformation, was the council of Pisa. But nothing good was to be expected from Julius, a man, in the language of worldly greatness, renowned for military ambition. By his intrigues the council of Pisa was dissolved, and Julius died in 1513, after he had filled the Christian world with blood and confusion by his violence and rapacity.

Leo X.† a man famous for the encouragement of letters and the fine arts, and deservedly celebrated among the patrons of learned men, succeeded. But historical veracity can scarcely admit any further encomium on his character. He was a Florentine of the illustrious house of the Medici, and inherited the elegant taste and munificent spirit of that family. He was elected pope in the thirty-seventh year of his age. Though refined and humanized by his love of the liberal

* Seckendorf, Vol. I. p. 3.

† This prelate, the son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, was ordained at the age of seven years, made an abbot before he was eight years old, and at the age of thirteen became a cardinal! Such was the influence of his father in the court of Rome! Lorenzo, in a prudential letter to his son, tells him, that he had heard with pleasure of his attention to communion and confession; and that there was no better way for him to obtain the favour of heaven, than by habituating himself to the performance of such duties. Roscoe's Life of Lorenzo de Medici.—Lorenzo appears to have known the art of rising in this world, better than the narrow road to eternal life.

arts, and extremely abhorrent from the savage manners of Alexander and of Julius, he possessed other qualities no less inconsistent than theirs with the character of a pastor of the Church of Christ. An excessive magnificence, a voluptuous indolence, and above all, a total want of religious principle, rendered him perhaps more strikingly void of every sacerdotal qualification than any pontiffs before him. He has been accused of open infidelity; but the proofs are said to be only negative; certainly, however, he at no time took the least pains to discover to mankind that he had a sincere reverence for religion. It was during the pontificate of this man, that Providence gave the severest blow to the authority of the Roman hierarchy, which it had ever received since the days of Gregory II.

Both before his exaltation and after it, he opposed with dexterity and success the laudable attempts after a reformation, which have been mentioned. A council called by this pope, and held in the Lateran palace, was directed under his auspices against the determinations of the council of Pisa. Afterwards, in the year 1517, the university of Paris, renowned at that time through Europe for learning and knowledge, appealed from its decisions to a future general council. It is not necessary to enter into the detail of these transactions. They are here briefly mentioned in a general way, for the purpose of showing that common sense and the voice of natural conscience had agreed to the necessity of a reformation, though men knew not the principles on which it ought to proceed. The greatest personages of the times had delivered their sentiments to the same effect. The existence of the distemper was admitted. The true remedy was unknown; that was to be drawn only from the word of God; and almost all parties were equally ignorant of the contents of the sacred volumes. In the same year, however, the spirit of Luther was raised up, to instruct the ignorant, to rouse the negligent, and to oppose the scandalous practices of interested and ambitious ecclesiastical rulers.

Appeal of
the Univer-
sity of Paris,
A. D. 1517.

Rise of
Luther,
A. D. 1517.

No reformer had ever an opportunity more favourable

to his designs. Such was the temerity of the existing hierarchy, that they might seem even to have purposely afforded to their opponents an advantage for the beginning of a contest, or rather to have been providentially infatuated. Leo X. after he had presided almost five years, having reduced himself to straits by his prodigal expenses of various kinds, and being desirous to complete the erection of St. Peter's church, began at Rome by his

Sale of Indulgences.

predecessor Julius II., after his example, had recourse to the sale of indulgences, the general nature of which Maimbourg describes much in the same manner as has been done in the foregoing chapter*.

These he published throughout the Christian world, granting freely to all, who would pay money for the building of St. Peter's church, the licence of eating eggs and cheese in the time of Lent. This is one of the many ridiculous circumstances which attended Leo's indulgences,

and it is gravely related by the papal historians. The promulgation of these indulgences in Germany was committed to a prelate, the brother of the elector of Brandenburg. His name was Albert, a man who at that very time held two archbishoprics, namely, those of Mentz and of Magdeburg, and who himself received immense profits from the sale. Albert delegated the office to John Tetzel, a Dominican inquisitor, well qualified for an employ-

Character of Tetzel.

ment of this kind. He was a bold and enterprising monk, of uncommon impudence, and had already distinguished himself in a similar transaction. He had proclaimed indulgences in support of the war against the Muscovites, and by that means had much enriched the Teutonic knights, who had undertaken that war. "This frontless monk," says a celebrated ecclesiastical historian†, executed this iniquitous commission not only with matchless insolence, indecency, and fraud, but even carried his impiety so far as to derogate from the all-sufficient power and influence of the merits of Christ.

* Seckend. p. 8. Let the reader remember, that this incomparable author, Seckendorf, gives us all along the very words of his antagonist, whence the papal as well as the protestant materials are continually held up to view.

Even Du Pin allows, that Leo was naturally proud and lofty; and he confesses, that the erection of St. Peter's church was the occasion of that pope's having recourse to the sale of indulgences.—Book II. Chap. 1.

† Mosheim.

Myconius assures us, that he himself heard Tetzel declaim with incredible effrontery, concerning the unlimited power of the pope and the efficacy of indulgences. The people believed, that the moment any person had paid the money for the indulgence, he became certain of his salvation, and that the souls, for whom the indulgences were bought, were instantly released out of purgatory. So Maimbourg allows ; and if the people really believed the current doctrine of the times, and looked on the preachers of indulgences as men worthy of credit, they must have believed so. We have formerly seen popes themselves to hold this confident language. John Tetzel boasted, that he had saved more souls from hell by his indulgences, than St. Peter had converted to Christianity by his preaching. He assured the purchasers of them, that their crimes, however enormous, would be forgiven ; whence it became almost needless for him to bid them dismiss all fears concerning their salvation. For remission of sins being fully obtained, what doubt could there be of salvation ? In the usual form of absolution, written by his own hand, he said, " May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon thee, and absolve thee by the merits of his most holy passion !

The form
of an Ab-
solution.

And I, by his authority, that of his Apostles Peter and Paul, and of the most holy pope, granted and committed to me in these parts, do absolve thee, first, from all ecclesiastical censures, in whatever manner they have been incurred ; and then from all the sins, transgressions, and excesses, how enormous soever they may be, even from such as are reserved for the cognizance of the holy see : and as far as the keys of the holy church extend, I remit to thee all the punishment which thou deservest in purgatory on their account ; and I restore thee to the holy sacraments of the church, to the unity of the faithful, and to that innocence and purity which thou possessedst at baptism ; so that when thou diest, the gates of punishment shall be shut, and the gates of the paradise of delight shall be opened ; and if thou shalt not die at present, this grace shall remain in full force when thou art at the point of death. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost*."—Such was the style

* Seckend. p. 14.

in which these formulas were written. It is impertinent to blame the abuses committed by the officials; it is not to be supposed that these formulas were without papal authority; neither has any thing of that kind ever been asserted. In regard to the effect of indulgences in delivering persons from the supposed torments of purgatory, the gross declarations of Tetzel in public are well known: "The moment the money tinkles in the chest, your father's soul mounts up out of purgatory." It does not appear that the rulers of the hierarchy ever found the least fault with Tetzel as exceeding his commission, till an opposition was openly made to the practice of indulgences. Whence it is evident, that the protestants have not unjustly censured the corruptions of the court of Rome in this respect. Leo is declared to have granted, immediately and without hesitation*, the profits of the indulgences collected in Saxony and the neighbouring countries as far as the Baltic, to his sister, the wife of prince Cibus, by way of gratitude for personal favours which he had received from the family of the Cibi. The indulgences were farmed to the best bidders, and the undertakers employed such deputies to carry on the traffic, as they thought most likely to promote their lucrative views. The inferior officers concerned in this commerce were daily seen† in public houses, enjoying themselves in riot and voluptuousness: In fine, whatever the greatest enemy of popery could have wished, was at that time exhibited with the most undisguised impudence and temerity, as if on purpose to render that wicked ecclesiastical system infamous before all mankind.

It may not be improper to introduce the following anecdote concerning Tetzel, the audacious vender of the papal indulgences.

When the emperor Maximilian was at Inspruck, he was so offended at the wickedness and impudence of Tetzel, who had been convicted of adultery, that he condemned him to death, and had intended to have him seized and put into a bag, and flung into the river *Œnoponte*; but he was prevented by the solicitations of Frederic the elector of Saxony, who, fortunately for Tetzel, happened to be there at the time‡.

* Maimbourg, p. 11.

† Id. p. 12.

‡ Adam. Melch.

Burnet informs us, that the scandalous sale of pardons and indulgences had by no means so completely ceased in popish countries as is commonly taken for granted. He says, that in Spain and Portugal there is every where a commissary, who manages the sale with the most infamous circumstances imaginable. In Spain, the king, by an agreement with the pope, has the profits. In Portugal, the king and the pope go shares.

“In the year 1709 the privateers of Bristol took a galleon, in which they found five hundred bales of bulls” for indulgences “and sixteen reams were in a bale. So that they reckon the whole came to 3,840,000. These bulls are imposed on the people and sold, the lowest at three ryals, a little more than twenty-pence, but to some at about eleven pounds of our money All are obliged to buy them in Lent.” The author adds, “Besides the account given of this in the cruising voyage, I have a particular attestation of it by Captain Dampier*.”

Protestants in our times are not sufficiently aware of the evils from which, under the blessing of God, a great part of Europe has been delivered, by the rational, animated, and persevering exertions of Luther, his associates, and other early reformers.

Indulgences were granted also under the pontificate of Leo X. on many PARTICULAR occasions. The consecrated Host had been lost at the parish church at Schiniedeberg in the diocese of Misnia: in consequence of which, the pastor had excommunicated the deacon and the porter of the church. These men, whom the superstition of the times had made culprits, had, however, recourse to the generosity of Tetzels, who was in the neighbourhood, and who furnished them with a diploma of absolution†. The prices of these indulgences were accommodated to the various circumstances of petitioners; and thus a plan was formed and was successfully carrying into execution, which would infallibly lay all orders of men under contribution. The prodigious sale of indulgences evinces both the profound ignorance of the age, and also the power of superstitious fears, with which the consciences of men were then distressed. This however was the very

* Vol. III. Introd. p. 20.

† Seckend. p. 15.

situation of things, which opened the way for the reception of the Gospel. But who was to proclaim the Gospel in its native beauty and simplicity? To give a satisfactory answer to this question was no easy matter. The princes, the bishops, and the learned men of the times, saw all this scandalous traffic respecting the pardon of sins; but none was found who possessed the knowledge, the courage, and the honesty necessary to detect the fraud, and to lay open to mankind the true doctrine of salvation by the remission of sins through Jesus Christ. But at length an obscure pastor appeared, who alone, and without help, began to erect the standard of sound religion. No man who believes that "the preparation of the heart is from the Lord," will doubt whether Martin Luther, in this great undertaking, was moved by the Spirit of God. This extraordinary person, at that time an Augustine monk, was professor or lecturer of the university of Wittemberg in Saxony. That academy was at once a college of students and a society of monks. Frederic the Wise, elector of Saxony, ardently desirous of promoting literary knowledge, had added the former character to the latter, and always showed a steady regard to Luther, on account of his skill and industry in advancing the reputation of that infant seminary of knowledge, which then was very low and abject both in its revenues and its exterior appearance. Luther takes the alarm, preached also from time to time, and heard confessions *. In the memorable year 1517, it happened, that certain persons, repeating their confessions before him, and owning themselves to be atrocious offenders, yet refused to comply with the penances which he enjoined them, because they said they were possessed of diplomas of indulgences. Luther was struck with the evident absurdity of such conduct, and ventured to refuse them absolution. The persons thus rejected complained loudly to Tetzel, who was preaching in a town at no great distance. The Dominican inquisitor had not been accustomed to contradiction. He stormed and frowned, and menaced every one who dared to oppose him; and sometimes he ordered a pile of wood to be constructed

* Seckend, p. 17.

and set on fire, for the purpose of striking terror into the minds of heretics. Luther was at that time only thirty-four years old, vigorous both in mind and body, fresh from the schools, and fervent in the Scriptures. He saw crowds flock to Wittemberg and the neighbouring towns to purchase indulgences, and having no clear idea of the nature of that traffic, yet sensible of the obvious evils with which it must be attended, he began to signify, in a gentle manner, from the pulpit, that the people might be better employed than in running from place to place to procure INDULGENCES. So cautiously did this great man begin a work, the consequence of which he then so little foresaw. He did not so much as know at that time who were the receivers of the money. In proof of this, we find he wrote to Albert, archbishop of Mentz, who, he understood, had appointed Tetzel to this employment, but with whose personal * concern in the gains he was then unacquainted, entreating him to withdraw the licence of Tetzel, and expressing his fears of the evils which would attend the sale of indulgences. He sent him likewise certain theses, which he had drawn up in the form of queries, concerning this subject. He expressed himself with the greatest caution and modesty. In fact, he saw enough to alarm a tender conscience, but he knew not well where to fix the blame. He was not, as yet, fully satisfied in his own mind, either as to the extent of the growing mischief, or the precise nature of its cause. In this state of doubt and anxiety, he wrote also to other bishops, and particularly to his own diocesan, the bishop of Brandenburg †, with whom he was a particular favourite.

Nothing can be more orderly, candid, and open, than this conduct of our Reformer ‡. Zeal and charity were here united with the most perfect regard to ecclesiastical

* See p. 420 of this Vol.

† Seckend. p. 16.

‡ Du Pin, in conjunction with all the Roman-catholic writers, asserts that Luther's zeal for the interest of his own order, led him to oppose the doctrine of Indulgences. The best refutation of this calumny is to be derived from a fair statement of facts. It has been said likewise, that Staupitius, the vicar-general of Luther's order of monks, and that the elector of Saxony, stimulated Luther to commence his opposition. But there is nowhere to be found the smallest proof of these assertions. The love of truth itself appears from his whole conduct to have influenced his measures, and the story needs only to be fairly told, in order to convince any candid person that this was the case.

discipline. The bishop of Brandenburg revered the integrity of Luther, while he was aware of the dangerous ground on which he was advancing. "You will oppose the Church," he replied; "you cannot think in what troubles you will involve yourself; you had much better be still and quiet." This was not a language calculated to repress the firm and intrepid spirit of the Saxon monk; for, though by no means as yet a competent master of the points in debate, he saw they were of too great magnitude for a conscientious pastor to pass them by unnoticed: He knew too the manners of lower life, and could judge, far better than the bishops in general could do, of the mischievous consequences which were to be apprehended. With deliberate steadiness he ventured therefore to persevere; and having tried in vain to procure the concurrence of the dignitaries of the church, he published his Theses, ninety-five in number; and in fifteen days they were spread throughout Germany. Their effect on the minds of men was rapid and powerful, though Tetzel, by threats, had silenced some pastors who had faintly opposed him, and though bishops and doctors, through fear of the flames, remained perfectly silent.

Luther publishes 95 Propositions against Indulgences.

"Thus," says Luther,—for much of the foregoing account is taken from his own words,—“I was commended as an excellent doctor, who, alone, had the spirit to attempt so great an undertaking: but the fame which I had acquired was by no means agreeable to my mind; because I had then some doubts concerning the nature of indulgences, and because I feared that the task was beyond my powers and capacity*.”

But the real motives of Luther will be discovered in the surest manner by a brief review of the manners and spirit of the man, previous to his open declarations respecting indulgences. This Saxon Reformer was born in the year 1483, at Isleben, a town belonging to the county of Mansfield. His father wrought in the mines of Mansfield, which were at that time very famous; and, after the birth of his son Martin Luther, removed to that town, became a pro-

Birth of Luther,

A. D. 1483.

* Seckend. p. 16.

priotor in the mines, discharged public offices there, and was esteemed by all men for his integrity. He gave a very liberal education to Martin, who was remarkable for dutiful affection to his parents in general, though in one instance, to be mentioned presently, he was led away by the superstition of the times, so as to offend his father exceedingly. After he had made great proficiency in his studies at Magdeburg, Eisenach, and Erfurt, he commenced master of arts in the university of Erfurt, at the age of twenty; and having now finished his course of philosophy, he began to give close attention to the science of the civil law, and is said to have intended to advance himself by pleading at the bar; but he was diverted from his purpose by an accident*. As he was walking in the fields with one of his most intimate friends, his companion was suddenly killed by lightning; and Luther himself was so terrified, partly by this event, and partly by the horrid noise of the thunder, that while his mind was in the utmost consternation, he formed the sudden resolution of withdrawing from the world, and of throwing himself into the monastery at Erfurt. His father, a man of plain, but sound understanding, strongly remonstrated. The son as strongly pleaded what he considered as a terrible call from heaven, to take upon himself the monastic vow. "Take care," replied the father, "that you are not ensnared by a delusion of the devil." But the mind of Martin was determined; and filial disobedience, in such a case, was looked on as a virtue. To the great grief and mortification of his father, Luther enters the monastery, he entered the monastery in the year 1505. A. D. 1505.

In one of his letters, he owns, that from the very beginning of his monastic life he was constantly sad and dejected†; and being unable to give peace to his mind, he at length opened his griefs to John Staupitius, vicar-general of the Augustine monks in Germany, a man highly esteemed by Frederic the Wise, and consulted by him particularly in things which concerned the university of Wittemberg. Staupitius himself appears to have had

* Du Pin.—Moreri.—Maimbourg.

Some authors say, that Luther's intimate friend was found murdered about the same time that he himself was so terrified by the thunder.

† Seckend. p. 19.

some serious views of religion, and a degree of knowledge at that time very uncommon. After Luther had explained to him the uneasy thoughts with which he was burdened, "You do not know," said he, "how useful and necessary this trial may be to you; God does not thus exercise you for nothing; you will one day see that he will employ you as his servant for great purposes." The event gave ample honour to the sagacity of Staupitius, and it is very evident, that a deep and solid conviction of sin, leading the mind to the search of Scripture truth, and the investigation of the way of peace, was the main spring of Luther's whole after-conduct; and indeed this view of our Reformer's state of mind furnishes the only key to the discovery of the real motives by which he was influenced in his public transactions. Rash and prejudiced writers, of the popish persuasion, choose to represent him as having been under the dominion of avarice or ambition; but till they can produce some proofs beyond their own suspicions or bare affirmations, all such slanderous accusation must fall to the ground. In truth, no man was ever more free from avarice and ambition: the fear of God predominated to a very high degree in Luther's mind; and a nice sensibility of conscience, attended with an uncommon insight into the depth of our natural depravity, allowed him no rest. As yet he understood not the Scriptures, nor felt that peace of God which passeth understanding. He had too much light to sit down in slothful content and indifference, and too little to discern the rich treasures of the Gospel, and apply its healing promises to deep convictions of sin and misery. He remained for above a year not only in constant anxiety and suspense, but in perpetual dread and alarm. All these things are abundantly evident, and beyond all contradiction, to those who are acquainted with his writings.

In the second year after Luther had entered into the monastery, he accidentally met with a Latin Bible in the library. It proved to him a treasure. Then he first discovered that there were MORE scripture-passages extant than those which were read to the people: for the Scriptures were at that time very little known in the world. In reading the word of God with prayer, his understanding

was gradually enlightened, and he found some beams of evangelical comfort to dart into his soul. The same year he was refreshed in his sickness by the discourse of an old monk, who showed him that remission of sins was to be apprehended by faith alone, and referred him to a passage in Bernard's sermon on the annunciation, where the same doctrine was taught. With incredible ardour he now gave himself up to the study of the Scriptures, and the books of Augustine. He was at length regarded as the most ingenious and learned man of his order in Germany. But the soul of Luther was constantly panting for something very different from secular glory.

He was ordained in the year 1507, and in the next year was called to the professorship at Wittemberg by Staupitius, where a theatre was opened for the display of his talents both as a teacher of philosophy and as a popular preacher. He excelled in both capacities. Eloquent by nature, and powerful in moving the affections, acquainted also in a very uncommon manner with the elegancies and energy of his native tongue, he became the wonder of his age. These things are allowed very liberally by his enemies*; but it ought to be observed, that the exercises of his own mind, by which, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he was led more and more into Christian truth, would naturally add a strength to his oratory, unattainable by those who speak not from the heart. Martin Polichius, a doctor of law and medicine, exclaimed, "This monk will confound all the doctors, will exhibit new doctrine, and reform the whole Roman church; for he is intent on reading the writings of the Prophets and Apostles, and he depends on the word of Jesus Christ; this, neither the philosophers nor the sophists can subvert." He who spake thus was himself looked on as a prodigy of wisdom; and, I suppose, a degree of discernment less than his might have shown an attentive observer, that the didactic plan of Luther was that of an original thinker, who was not likely to confine himself to the beaten track, but to produce something new to mankind. Melancthon's concise account entirely agrees with this statement: "Polichius," says he, "often declared, that there was a strength

Luther was
ordained,
A. D. 1507.

* Page 18, Maimbourg. Page 22, Varillas.

of intellect in this man, which he plainly foresaw would produce a revolution in the popular and scholastic religion of the times." Nor does it seem at all improbable, that if Luther had followed merely the dictates of his own adventurous genius, he might have been the inventor of some novel theological schemes and doctrines. But all tendency to fanciful excursions in the important concerns of religion, was effectually restrained and chastised in the mind of our Reformer, by his profound reverence for the written word : moreover, from his first entrance into the monastery, he appears to have been taught of God, and to have been led more and more into such discoveries of native depravity, as render a man low in his own eyes, and dispose him to receive the genuine Gospel of Christ.

In the year 1510, he was sent to Rome on some business, which related to his own monastery ; and this he

Luther sent
to Rome, discharged with so much ability and success,
that on his return he was compelled by the vicar-

A. D. 1510. general to assume the degree of doctor of divinity. He writes, that he did this with great reluctance, and entirely from obedience to his superiors. It is easy indeed for a man to say this ; but from the mouth of Luther, it is with me decisive of its truth. For veracity and integrity do evidently appear to have remarkably entered into the character of this Reformer, as indeed these virtues are always to be eminently found in those who have had the most genuine experience of Christianity. The expenses attending this high degree were defrayed by the elector of Saxony, who always admired Luther, and was perfectly convinced of the profundity of his learning and the rectitude of his views in religion. While he had been at Rome, he had discovered something of the singularity of his character, which had attracted the attention of the Italian priests. The external rites of religion, which to them were matter of political formality, with him were serious exercises. While they hurried over their exercises of the mass, he performed his with a solemnity and devotion which excited their ridicule, and they bad him to repeat them with more rapidity. A thoughtful mind like his could not conceive that religious employments should be discharged with levity, and he returned to his monastery more fully convinced than ever,

that Rome was not the scene in which a serious pastor could properly learn the rudiments of religion. He studied and taught the Scriptures with increasing ardour and alacrity, and after he had been created a doctor, in the year 1512, he expounded the Psalms and the Epistle to the Romans, to the great satisfaction of his audience. He studied the Hebrew and the Greek languages, and highly valued the philological labours of the famous Erasmus of Rotterdam, the renowned reviver of classical literature; and while he concurred with that great man in his contempt of monastic trifles, he was intensely studious to learn better and more scriptural notions of God and his attributes, than those which Erasmus so ingeniously satirized. To build was, however, found much more arduous, as it is certainly a far more important work, than to pull down; and from the time that Luther was created a doctor of divinity, he conscientiously devoted his time and talents to the sacred office. Already he was suspected of heresy, because of his dislike of the scholastic doctrines; and he was induced, both from the natural soundness of his understanding, and from the spiritual exercises of his own heart, to reject the Aristotelian corruptions of theology, and to study the genuine doctrines of Scripture.

Luther
created
Doctor of
Divinity,
A. D. 1512.

In 1516, he thus wrote to a friend*: "I desire to know what your soul is doing; whether, wearied at length of its own righteousness, it learns to refresh itself and to rest in the righteousness of Christ. The temptation of presumption in our age is strong in many, and specially in those who labour to be just and good with all their might, and at the same time are ignorant of the righteousness of God, which in Christ is conferred upon us with a rich exuberance of gratuitous liberality. They seek in themselves to work that which is good, in order that they may have a confidence of standing before God, adorned with virtues and merits, which is an impossible attempt. You, my friend, used to be of this same opinion, or rather this same mistake; so was I, but now I am fighting against the error, but have not yet prevailed."

A letter of
Luther,
A. D. 1516.

This interesting and instructive letter demonstrates

* Seckend. p. 20.

what was the religious frame of our monk at that time. He had received the grace of Christ, and knew the true and only way of salvation ; though, in his own eyes at least, he was weak in the faith. He both felt and preached the fundamentals of the Gospel, before he appeared in the field against popery ; and if he had not been absolutely persecuted into a secession, such was his modesty and love of peace and order, and so little had he then studied the particular corruptions of the hierarchy, that he would, in all probability, have continued to his death an obedient son of the Roman church. Many excellent men had done so before him ; because, through inadvertency, they had remained unconscious of the absurdities of the predominant religion. The methods of Providence were, however, admirable in conducting Luther into the depths of a controversy, to which he seems to have had no inclination. Indulgences were preached, and he saw the evil of them in a practical, rather than a theoretical light, and was thence drawn undesignedly into a contest, the effects of which were salutary to so many nations. Those who apprehend that when he began the contest, he was ignorant of the nature of the Gospel, appear not to have known the order and method by which the mind of the Saxon Reformer was conducted into religious truth.

In the same year he was appointed by Staupitius, subaltern vicar ; by which office he was authorized to visit about forty monasteries in Misnia and Thuringia. Returning to Wittemberg in June, he wrote to Spalatinus, who was the secretary of the elector, and always showed himself a steady friend of Luther, in terms which expressed the frank effusions of his own heart, on a review of the state of religion in the country, which the visitation had given him an opportunity of accurately observing. " Many things please your prince, and look great in his eyes, which are displeasing to God. In secular wisdom, I confess that he is of all men most knowing ; but, in things pertaining to God, and which relate to the salvation of souls, I must own that he is blind sevenfold." This was the true character of Frederic at that time, though justly esteemed the wisest prince of the age ; and though he was sincerely and ingenuously desirous of pro-

moting religion and virtue. In fact, his good understanding was oppressed with a heavy load of the most pitiable superstitions. He was, however, by no means displeased with Luther for using freedom of speech ; and there is reason to believe that, afterwards, he learnt more of the true nature of the Gospel, though by very slow degrees.

In the October of the same year, Luther communicated to his learned friend Spalatinus, his thoughts concerning certain of the fathers, and also concerning Erasmus's method of interpreting Scripture *. This memorable epistle deserves the particular attention of the reader, as it furnishes judicious and connected observations on Augustine and his contemporaries, and on the fathers both who preceded and who followed them ; and as it likewise suggests very useful reflections on the comparative merits of theologians in different periods, from the days of Cyprian to those of Luther and Erasmus.

Luther's
character of
Erasmus as
a divine.

Luther, to Georg. Spalatinus :—" That which strikes my mind in considering Erasmus, is this : In interpreting the Apostle's account of the righteousness of works, or, of the law, he understands by these terms ceremonial observances ONLY. In the next place, though he admits the doctrine of original sin, he will not allow that the Apostle speaks of it in the fifth chapter to the Romans. Now, if he had carefully read Augustine's Anti-Pelagian tracts, especially his account of the spirit and the letter, of the guilt of sin and the remission of it ; and had observed how he speaks in perfect unison with the best of the fathers, from Cyprian to Ambrose, he might have better understood the Apostle Paul, and also have conceived more highly of Augustine as an expositor, than he has hitherto done. In dissenting from Erasmus's judgment in this point, I must frankly declare, that I as much prefer Augustine's expositions to those of Jerome, as he prefers those of Jerome to Augustine's. I am, it is true, an Augustine monk ; but that circumstance has no influence on my judgment ; for till I had read this father's works, I had not the least prejudice in his favour.

* Lib. I. Ep. 20. See also the Appendix, Spalatinus.

But I see that Jerome studiously endeavours to draw every thing to a merely historical meaning* ; and, what is very extraordinary, where he expounds the Scriptures as it were occasionally or accidentally, as in his epistles, for instance, he does it in a much sounder manner than when he interprets professedly and on purpose. The righteousness of the law is by no means confined to ceremonies ; for, though it includes these, it still more directly respects an obedience to the whole Decalogue, which obedience, when it takes place to a certain degree, and yet has not Christ for its foundation, though it may produce such men as your Fabricius's, and your Regulus's, that is, very upright moralists according to man's judgment, has nothing in it of the nature of genuine righteousness. For men are not made truly righteous, as Aristotle supposes, by performing certain actions which are externally good,—for they may still be counterfeit characters ;—but, men must have righteous principles in the first place, and then they will not fail to perform righteous actions. God first respects Abel, and then his offering†. I beg you would put Erasmus in mind of these things. In so doing, you will discharge the duties both of a friend and of a Christian. As on the one hand, I hope and wish that he may be celebrated through the Christian world, so on the other I fear many may be induced, by the authority of his name, to patronise that literal and lifeless mode of interpreting Scripture, into which almost all commentators have fallen since the time of Augustine. I may be thought presumptuous and perhaps severe, in thus criticising many great men : my apology is, that I feel a concern for the cause of true theology, and for the salvation of the brethren."

A little before the controversy concerning indulgences, George, duke of Saxony, entreated Staupitius to send him some learned and worthy preacher. The vicar-general, in compliance with his request, dispatched Luther with strong recommendations to Dresden. George gave him an order to preach ; the sum of Luther's sermon was this‡ ; That

Luther
preaches at
Dresden be-
fore the duke
George.

* A merely historical meaning. A mere narration of facts, as opposed to a spiritual meaning, and a practical application to every man's conscience.

† Gen. iv.

‡ Seck. p. 23.

no man ought to despair of the possibility of salvation ; that those who heard the word of God with attentive minds, were true disciples of Christ, and were elected, and predestinated to eternal life. He enlarged on the subject, and showed that the whole doctrine of predestination, if the foundation be laid in Christ, was of singular efficacy to dispel that fear, by which men, trembling under the sense of their own unworthiness, are tempted to fly from God, who ought to be our sovereign refuge. An honourable matron, who attended the palace, and who had heard Luther, was asked by George, the duke, at dinner, how she liked the discourse. " I should die in peace," she said, " if I could hear such another sermon." The duke, in much anger, replied, " I would give a large sum of money, that a sermon of this sort, which encourages men in a licentious course of life, had never been preached." And he repeated this several times. Within the space of a month, the lady was confined in bed by sickness, and soon after died, rejoicing in her prospects of future glory. Fabricius concludes the account with saying*, " From that time Luther came no more to Dresden." That capital of modern Saxony was then part of the dukedom of George, who proved one of the most virulent enemies of Lutheranism. He was the uncle of prince Frederic the Wise. Like pharisaic formalists in all ages, he perversely misconstrued the doctrine of free salvation by Jesus Christ, which Luther preached, and which is intended to enable humble and repenting souls to serve God with lively faith and cheerful hope. The duke of Saxony, I observe, perversely misconstrued this doctrine, as though it had a tendency to persuade men to live in sin ; but the good matron above-mentioned, who resided at his court, appears to have tasted of that bitterness of true conviction of sin, which only can render the doctrine of grace delightful and salutary to the mind.

How precious this doctrine must have been to the mind of Luther himself, may be conceived from a well authenticated circumstance†, which evinces the state of mental bondage in which he had been held. Having for many days neglected, through the intenseness of his

* Orig. Sax. Lib. vii.

† Vol. I. p. 344. Bavar. Seck. p. 21.

studies, to recite the canonical hours, he, in compliance with the pope's decrees, and to satisfy his conscience, actually shut himself up in his closet, and recited what he had omitted with punctilious exactness, and with such severe attention and abstinence, as reduced his strength exceedingly, brought on nearly a total want of sleep for the space of five weeks, and almost produced symptoms of a weakened intellect. Is it to be wondered at, that he, who at length found relief and liberty by the grace of Christ, should be zealous to preach the mystery of the Cross to his fellow-creatures * ?

I have now laid before the curious reader some interesting particulars of the private life of Luther, previous to his assumption of that public character, which has made his name immortal. The serious Christian will adore the wisdom and goodness of Divine Providence, which, by preparatory exercises of soul, had directed this extraordinary personage into the true light and liberty of the Gospel of Christ, and fitted him for the great work to which he was called. At the same time it seems a certain fact, that the Saxon Reformer was not induced to act the part, which has given so great a celebrity to his name, from motives of personal malice, or of ambition, or of avarice, but purely from the fear of God, from a conscientious regard to evangelical truth, from a zeal for the divine glory, and for the profit of the souls of his fellow-creatures.

There are two points concerning Luther, on which all the most respectable, even of the papal party, unanimously concur in their testimony. The one is, That his learning, genius, and capacity, were of the first magnitude. It may seem proper to mention this, because some modern writers, who appear almost wholly ignorant of the real character of the man, have rashly represented him as a person of contemptible knowledge. But this is the common method of treating many great men, whose studies and attainments have happened to be but little connected with the pursuits and discoveries of the eighteenth century ; and till readers learn the practice of so much candour, as may dispose them to make equitable allowances for the taste

* See Appendix, Luther, for a further account of Luther by Melancthon.

of the times in which men of great abilities and great accomplishments have made their appearance, such superficial authors will always find admirers. The other particular, relative to our illustrious Reformer, is this, That his life is allowed to be without blemish. In fact, the Romanists, for the purpose of indulging the spirit of censure, are obliged to have recourse to surmises, for want of realities. When we are much out of humour with a person, it is human nature to ascribe his very best actions to bad motives. But the slanderous representations of enemies ought never to be substituted in the place of authentic documents. The writers alluded to may FANCY that Luther's conduct is best accounted for on the supposition, that pride, vanity, ambition, and resentment, were the ruling passions of the man they dislike; nevertheless, all readers of cool judgment will take care to distinguish between their prejudiced, ill-natured conjectures, and substantial proofs.

Far be it, however, from the historian's design to insinuate, that there were no faults or defects in the character which he so much admires. Besides the incessant ebullitions of native depravity, in the confession of which no man was ever more earnest than Luther, all real Christians, the most eminent saints not excepted, have their infirmities and their faults, which cost them much inward pain and sorrow; yet, it should ever be remembered, that in judging of true followers of Christ, by whatever name we may choose to call either their defective attainments or their positive blemishes, no fault, no imperfection, no falling short of the "perfect man in Christ Jesus," can be allowed, but what is absolutely consistent with sincerity of heart. The very candid and accurate memorialist Seckendorf, who is so useful to my researches, defies all the adversaries of Luther to fix any just censure on his character, except what may be ranked under two heads, namely, a disposition to anger, and an indulgence in jesting. Beyond all doubt, the Saxon Reformer was of a choleric temper, and he too often gave way to this constitutional evil, as he himself bitterly laments. Neither is it to be denied, that he also too much encouraged his natural propensity to facetiousness. The monks of his

time were, in general, guilty of the like fault, and often to so great a degree, as very improperly to mix scurrilities with sacred subjects. Moreover, the vices and the follies of those whom Luther opposed, afforded a strong temptation both to a spirit of anger and of ridicule. For, however severe he may be thought in many of his invectives, we are compelled by unquestionable evidence to confess, that his keenest satirical pieces never reached the demerits of those who ruled the church in that age. But, after all that can be said in mitigation, it must be owned, that a reformer ought to have considered not so much what they deserved, as what became the character he had to support; namely, that of a serious Christian, zealous for the honour of his God, displeased with the vices of his clerical brethren, and grieved on account of the pitiable ignorance of the people, yet more desirous of curing the prevailing evils than of exposing them.

These unhappy blemishes in Luther, doubtless appear much more offensive to us than they did in his own time among men of ruder manners, and accustomed to a greater freedom both of action and of expression in their mutual intercourse. They form the darkest shades in his writings, which, in all other respects, are truly admirable. One cannot but feel both some surprise and regret, that this great and good man should have failed, in so considerable a degree, to imitate his favourite author. An uniform spirit of meekness is the singular excellence which adorns the page of Augustine.

The defects, which we have mentioned, were too considerable to be passed over in silence; and, having now discharged the duty of an impartial historian, we leave it to the judicious reader himself to appreciate their just operation in lessening his esteem and veneration for this extraordinary personage. In contemplating the other qualities and endowments of our Reformer, we have no hesitation in affirming, that it is not easy to find a more blameless, or even a more excellent character. No man since the Apostles' days had penetrated into the sacred oracles with such singular felicity. He was endowed with a greatness of soul far beyond the common lot of men: Dangerous gift in a fallen creature! It was through di-

vine grace, that he was enabled to display and persevere in a conduct the most consistent, uncorrupt, and disinterested. His bold and adventurous spirit never appears in any one instance to have made the smallest encroachment on the most perfect integrity. Humane, generous, and placable, he was rarely diverted from the path of equity; and, notwithstanding the uncommon vehemence of his temper, he was often submissive and condescending. With an exquisite sensibility and readiness of conception, with a zeal and an imagination which never remitted their ardour for a single moment, he was most perfectly free from enthusiasm; and with a great capacity and unparalleled intrepidity, he seems to have been devoid of ambition, and contented to live all his days in very moderate circumstances. ONLY the Wise Disposer of all events, for the glory of his own name, and for the revival of true religion in Europe, by the effectual operation of his Holy Spirit, could have produced, at the season when most wanted, so faithful a champion, and possessed of so much vigour of intellect, of so daring a spirit, and of so truly humble and Christian-like a temper.

Such was the illustrious Luther, when he was called upon by Divine Providence to enter the lists, alone and without one assured ally, against the hosts of the pretended successor of St. Peter, who was then domineering over the Christian world in all his grandeur and plenitude of power.

I shall conclude this chapter with laying before the reader several concise testimonies to the talents and virtues of Luther, extracted from the writings of popish authors, who will not be suspected of any partiality towards the man whom they have been accustomed to consider as a detestable heretic. To transcribe the various encomiums which have been written on this celebrated character by his friends and admirers, by protestant authors, and by historians in general, would be an endless labour.

The Jesuit Maimbourg, in his History of Lutheranism, records many particulars respecting the learning and abilities of this celebrated heretic, as he calls him, which have not yet been mentioned.

Maimbourg's
character of
Luther.

“He possessed a quick and penetrating genius: he

was indefatigable in his studies, and frequently so absorbed in them as to abstain from meat for whole days together. He acquired great knowledge of languages and of the Fathers. He was remarkably strong and healthy, and of a sanguine, bilious temperament. His eyes were piercing, and full of fire. His voice sweet, and vehement when once fairly raised. He had a stern countenance; and though most intrepid and high spirited, he could assume the appearance of modesty and humility whenever he pleased, which, however, was not often the case. In his breast was lodged plenty of fuel for pride and presumption: hence his indiscriminate contempt of whatever opposed his heresies; hence his brutal treatment of kings, emperors, the pope, and of every thing in the world that is deemed most sacred and inviolable. Passionate, resentful, and domineering, he was continually aiming to distinguish himself by venting novel doctrines, and on no occasion could be induced to retract what he had once advanced. He maintained that Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Scotus, Bonaventura, and others, had undermined the foundations of true philosophy and of Christian Theology; and he endeavoured to raise up a system of his own, upon the ruins of those very great geniuses. This is an exact portrait of Martin Luther, of whom it may be truly said, there was in the man a great mixture both of good and of bad qualities: the bad predominated; but he was abundantly more corrupt in his thoughts and sentiments, than in his life and manners. He was always reckoned to live sufficiently blameless while he remained in the monastery, and till he absolutely ruined all his good qualities by his heresies."

Varillas, a celebrated French historian, in his diffuse history of various heresies, speaks of Luther in the following manner: "This Augustine monk united in his single person all the good and all the bad qualities of the heresiarchs of his time. To the robustness, health, and industry of a German, nature seems here to have added the spirit and vivacity of an Italian. Nobody exceeded him in philosophy and scholastic theology; nobody equalled him in the art of speaking. He was a most perfect master of eloquence. He had

Varillas' character of the same.

completely discovered where lay the strength or the weakness of the human mind ; and, accordingly, he knew how to render his attacks successful. However various or discordant might be the passions of his audience, he could manage them to his own purposes ; for he presently saw the ground on which he stood ; and even if the subject was too difficult for much argument, he carried his point by popular illustration and the use of figures. In ordinary conversations, he displayed the same power over the affections, which he had so often demonstrated in the professorial chair and the pulpit. He rarely attempted to convince ; his method was to inflame men's passions, and afterwards gradually to insinuate his opinions. No man, either of his own time or since, spoke or wrote the German language, or understood its niceties, better than Luther. Often, when he had made his first impression by bold strokes of eloquence, or by a bewitching pleasantry of conversation, he completed his triumphs by the elegance of his German style. On the contrary, he was rude, satirical, ambitious, and ungrateful ; disposed to anger on the slightest occasions, and for the most part implacable. He was much addicted to excesses at the table, and was CAPABLE of the usual concomitant vices ; though his monastic life deprived him almost entirely of opportunities of indulging himself in them."

No remarks need be made on these entertaining descriptions of Luther. The surmises and the exaggerations they contain are sufficiently obvious : the reader will easily separate them from the truth, and will at the same time perceive how much the account, which we have given of our Reformer, is corroborated by these enemies of the reformation.

Moreri, in his Historical Miscellany, says of Luther, "This heresiarch gloried in his apostacy, and in the lamentable schism of the church, and filled his writings with his poisons. He composed various works ; and it cannot be denied that he was a man of much learning and fire of genius. Vanity was his motive, whatever pains may have been taken to represent him as a person of integrity and moderation. Henry VIII. king of England, in answer to Luther, had

Moreri's
account of
Luther.

sent to pope Leo a learned defence of the seven sacraments. Luther replied to the monarch in so insolent a manner, that it was easy to see from this single instance, that a man of such a temper could not be under the influence of the Spirit of God. Besides, he published a seditious book against the bishops; and had the IMPUDENCE TO OPPOSE THE POPE'S BULL, in which he himself was excommunicated."

As my chief object in giving these extracts is to satisfy the reader, from the testimony of Luther's enemies, of his great learning and talents, I content myself with quoting briefly the substance of what has been repeatedly and distinctly conceded by the most noted Roman-catholic writers, in regard to these points; and I entirely omit many scandalous falsehoods, which have been invented by malicious advocates for the papal system, with the view of defaming the character of our Reformer. His two blemishes have been mentioned above, as allowed by the incomparable Seckendorf, and these no judicious defender of protestants or of protestantism will ever undertake to defend.

Those who wish to see a full account, and also a confutation, of the idle inventions and abominable falsehoods here alluded to, may consult, with advantage, Bayle's account of Luther. the celebrated Historical and Critical Dictionary by Peter Bayle. This author, though justly esteemed an infidel in religion, was a man of brilliant parts and acute intellect; and he has collected together much useful information respecting Martin Luther, and both his friends and his adversaries.

"I," says this writer, "shall chiefly insist on the many falsehoods which have been published respecting Luther. No regard has been paid, in this point, to the rules of the art of slandering. And yet the authors of them have assumed all the confidence of those who fully believe that the public will implicitly espouse their stories, be they ever so absurd. They accuse him of having confessed that he had struggled for ten years together with his conscience, and at last had become perfectly master of it, and fallen into atheism. They impudently maintain, that he denied the immortality of the soul. They

charge him with having gross and carnal ideas of heaven, and with composing hymns in honour of drunkenness. Most of these calumnies are grounded upon some words in a certain book published by Luther's friends, to which his adversaries give a horrid meaning, and very different from this ecclesiastic's real thoughts. His greatest enemies could not deny that he had eminent qualities; and history affords nothing more surprising than his exploits. For a simple monk to give so rude a shock to popery, is what we cannot sufficiently admire. He had made great progress in scholastic learning, yet no one fell so foul upon the method of philosophizing at that time, nor was any man more vehemently bent against the great Aristotle."

The same author produces the following remarkable citation from a noted French writer, who was one of Luther's slanderers *. "Luther was a perfect atheist. His own disciple, Dr. Aurifaber, deposes, as an ear-witness, that he heard Luther himself say in the pulpit, he thanked God he felt no longer any disturbance of his conscience, and that he began to see the fruits of his Gospel among his disciples. "*Nam post revelatum Evangelium meum,*" said he, "*Virtus est occisa, justitia oppressa, temperantia ligata, veritas lacerata, fides clauda, nequitia quotidiana, devotio pulsa, hæresis relictæ.*" Mons^r Garasse translates this passage thus: "I have fought with such success, that I have stifled the seeds of virtue, oppressed justice, extinguished sobriety, rent truth to pieces, broken the pillars of faith, made villany familiar, banished devotion, and introduced heresy." Upon which P. Bayle makes the following excellent observation: "There is no need to observe here, that all this is to be understood by the rules of contraries; the thing speaks for itself; and I am certain there is no honest man, whatever religion he is of, but will detest or pity the extravagance of such a slanderer." It is not at all improbable but Luther might use, in his pulpit, the very words here brought against him in accusation; nor is it necessary to suppose, that, in the warmth and haste of eloquence, and to make his meaning clear, he should even have used the words, *THEY SAID, OR, MINE ENEMIES CRIED OUT, &c.* Nothing can

* Mons^r Garasse.

be more obvious than the sense of the citation, even as it stands. "After my way of expounding the Gospel became known," says Luther*, **THEY SAID, OR, MINE ENEMIES CRIED OUT,** "virtue is stifled, justice is oppressed," and so on; and we are left to wonder how an omission, which is quite common in all vehement harangues, whatever be the language spoken, could possibly be made, by any reasonable man, the occasion of so much calumny. Those, however, will wonder less, who have been accustomed to observe, how frequently it happens in our times, that sound and zealous preachers of the Gospel are misrepresented and reviled, as though their interpretations of the nature of Christ's salvation had a tendency to promote licentiousness.

Let not the reader forget, that my present object is to produce evidences of Luther's learning and talents from the mouths of his adversaries, or at least from the mouths of those who have shown no particular predilection for the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ. It would be with much pain and reluctance, that I should be compelled to place the famous Erasmus among either of these classes. His great learning, his elegant taste, and his acute understanding, are all unquestionable; neither is there any doubt how very serviceable his writings proved in preparing men's minds to approve the bolder and more decisive measures of Luther†. But still, in my judgment, the proofs of his love of ease, of fame, and of the esteem of persons of rank and consequence, are far more numerous, than any examples which can be produced of his sincere regard for the essential doctrines of Christianity, or of the evangelical humility of his own mind. Though it may be extremely difficult to delineate accurately the character of this sort, his observations, nevertheless, on the great men and great transactions of his own times, cannot fail to be valuable. Moreover, as Erasmus at no time, I believe, was very fond of Luther, and as they very much opposed and controverted each other's opinions, the judgment of this illustrious scholar respecting the great Saxon Reformer, may be laid before the reader in

* All becomes clear, by supposing the words here printed in capitals to have been implied, though not actually said. † See p. 398 of this Vol.

this place with much propriety. Indeed the following extracts are the more important and also suitable to be cited here, because, first, they decisively prove the abilities of Luther; and, secondly, they contain many facts and circumstances which demonstrate the knowledge, learning, and integrity of our Reformer; and, lastly, they very materially corroborate the preceding account of the state of the religious world in general, when this extraordinary man began his opposition to the existing ecclesiastical tyranny.

Erasmus had so good an opinion of Luther's intentions, that in one of his epistles, he expresses his belief, "That God had sent him to reform mankind*." Me-

lancthon, in his Life of Luther, assures us from his own knowledge, that the elector of Saxony

The testimony of Erasmus.

besought Erasmus, in the very kindest manner, to tell him freely, whether he judged Luther to be mistaken respecting the principal controversies in which he was then engaged; and that Erasmus, on this occasion, spoke out, "That Luther's sentiments were true, but that he wished to see more mildness in his manner." In another letter he says, "The cause of Luther is invidious, because he at once attacks the bellies of the monks and the diadem of the pope†." In various other letters, and particularly in one written to cardinal Campe-

Erasmus's letter to Campegius, A. D. 1520.

gius in the year 1520, Erasmus opens his mind freely concerning Luther and his proceedings.

He acknowledges that he possessed great natural talents; and that he had a genius particularly adapted to the explanation of difficult points of literature, and for re-kindling the sparks of genuine evangelical doctrine, which were almost extinguished by the trifling subtilties of the schools. He adds, that men of the very best character, of the soundest learning, and of the most religious principles, were much pleased with Luther's books; further, that in proportion as any person was remarkable for upright morals and Gospel purity, he had the less objections to Luther's sentiments. "Besides," said he, "the life of the man is extolled, even by those who cannot bear his

* Ep. Alberto pio. App. cccxxxiii.

† This letter is to the elector of Saxony.

doctrines.—Some, indeed, in hatred to his person, condemn what is true, pervert and misinterpret what is right, and make him pass for a heretic, for saying the same things which they allow to have been pious and orthodox in Bernard and Austin.” Erasmus declares, that he had endeavoured, to the utmost of his power, to hinder Luther from being oppressed by a faction of raging zealots. It grieved him that a man of such FINE PARTS should be rendered desperate by the mad cries and bellowings of the monks. We ought, continued this sagacious writer, “to take notice of the source and spring of all this evil. The world was burthened with human inventions in the business of religion, loaded with the opinions and doctrines of the schools, and oppressed with the tyranny of the monks and begging friars. I do not condemn them all, but many of them are so mad, that for the sake of interest and rule, they hamper the consciences of men on purpose. They lay aside Christ and modesty, they preach nothing but their own innovations, and oftentimes scandalous doctrines. They speak of indulgences after such a manner, as is insupportable even to the laity. By these and such like methods, the power of the Gospel is dwindled to nothing ; and it is to be feared, that matters becoming continually worse, the little spark of Christian piety, by which the stifled spirit of charity might be rekindled, will be entirely quenched. The chief parts of religion are lost in ceremonies more than judaical. Good men lament and weep for these things ; and even divines, who are not monks, acknowledge the truth of them, as also some of the monks in their private conversations. These things, I believe, first put Luther upon the dangerous work of opposing some of the most intolerable and shameless abuses. For what can we think otherwise of a person, who neither aims at worldly honour nor riches ? I do not now consider the charges which they bring against the man ; I speak only of the apparent grounds of their animosity towards him. Luther had the boldness to call in question the GOOD of indulgences ; but others had first spoken too much and too boldly for them. Luther has dared to speak indecently of the power of the pope of Rome ; but others had first exalted it too indecently ; and

in particular, three preaching friars, Alvarus, Sylvester, and the cardinal of St. Sixtus. He dared to despise the decrees of Thomas Aquinas; but the Dominicans had extolled them almost above the Gospel. He dared to disclose some doubts in the matter of confession; but the monks continually perplexed the consciences of men upon that head. He dared to reject the conclusions of the schools in part; but others ascribed too much to them, and yet disagreed with them as well as he, altering them often, and introducing new notions in the place of those they abolished. It was matter of grief to pious minds, to hear almost nothing said in the schools of the doctrines of the Gospel, and that, in the sermons, little mention was made of Christ, but much of papal power, and of the opinions of recent writers. Luther has written a great deal that relishes more of imprudence than irreligion. But the greatest offence he has given, is, his want of respect to Thomas Aquinas; his lessening of the profits of indulgences; his despising of the Mendicant friars; his preferring of the Gospel to the doctrines of the schools; his opposing of the sophistries of disputants: all these are intolerable heresies*."

The reader, in this last instance, has had before him a witness, perfectly competent to decide on many of the points which usually afford matter for much controversy between papists and protestants; and as we trust the true character of the Saxon Reformer, in regard to his motives, abilities, and learning, is now fully ascertained, we return to the narrative of the progress of the dispute concerning the sale of indulgences.

CHAP. III.

THE PROGRESS OF THE CONTROVERSY CONCERNING INDULGENCES, TILL THE CONCLUSION OF THE CONFERENCES BETWEEN LUTHER AND CAJETAN.

TETZEL, the Dominican, alarmed at the publication of Luther's Theses, opposed to them one hundred and six

* Vid. Erasm. Epis. and Brandt's History of the Reformation.

propositions, in which he attempted to refute the arguments of the Augustine monk; and not content with this, by virtue of his inquisitorial authority, he also directed Luther's compositions to be burnt. It appears from very authentic documents*, that this shameless monk was an experienced veteran in the traffic of indulgences. He himself, in the year 1507, that is, ten years before the present dispute with Luther, had collected at Friberg two thousand florins in the space of two days by the iniquitous sale of that article. The sale of indulgences, therefore, was no new thing in the papal system; and the instance before us proves, that, occasionally at least, the scandalous practice might be carried to a very great extent. It is, however, a relief to the indignant mind, to find that ecclesiastical history furnishes some few examples of pious Christians with enlightened understanding, who had bravely withstood the growing corruption. To mention one: John, bishop of Misnia, had effectually discharged from his own diocese the popish proclaimers of indulgences, who, like merchants, had been vending every where their certificates of pardon of sins, as if they were an ordinary commodity†. He had blamed the people for foolishly putting their money into a chest, of which they had not the key; and had declared that, by reading the Bible, he had discovered the Apostolical religion to be very different from that which prevailed at present. This good prelate, a little before his death, happening to hear that Tetzel was again employed in a similar way, prophesied he would be the last of the dealers in indulgences, on account of his shameless audacity‡. Notwithstanding this, and every

Tetzel attempts to answer Luther's objections to Indulgences.

A. D. 1507.

* Moller. Cron. Fribergen.

† Chytr. Lib. II.

‡ "A soul," said Tetzel in his Theses, "may go to heaven, in the very moments, in which the money is cast into the chest. The man, who buys off his own sins by indulgences, merits more than he who gives alms to the poor, unless it be in extreme necessity." Other extraordinary assertions are likewise contained in his tracts, which demonstrate that protestant writers have not misrepresented the controversy before us. Suffice it to mention two sentences more. "The ministers of the church do not barely declare men's sins forgiven, but do really pardon them by virtue of the sacraments, and by the power of the keys.—They may impose a punishment to be suffered AFTER DEATH; and it is better to send a penitent with a small penance into purgatory, than by refusing him absolution to send him into hell." Du Pin, B. II. Seck. Lib. I.

other warning or remonstrance, the Dominican commissioner persevered in the traffic with augmented industry; and so much incensed the minds of Luther's disciples at Wittemberg, that they ventured, by way of retaliation, to burn publicly his Propositions, or Theses *, as they were called, with every mark of disapprobation and ignominy. Luther was much grieved at this rash action; and finding himself to be accused of instigating his followers to commit it, writes thus, to a friend. "I wonder, you could believe, that I was the author of the deed. Think you that I am so destitute of common sense, as to stigmatize, in such a manner, a person in so high an office? I know better the rules of ecclesiastical subordination, and have more regard to my own character, both as a monk and as a theologian, than to act so." There were also persons, who, pretending to be in possession of court intrigues, were fond of circulating the report, that Luther had published his theses by the secret instigations of the elector Frederic. Luther, with great concern, takes notice of this false surmise. In a letter to his friend Spalatinus, he thus expresses his feelings: "I am heartily vexed at the scandalous report, which is diffused with much malignity, namely, that in all I do, I am only the ENGINE of our illustrious prince, for the purpose of disgracing the archbishop of Mentz. What do you think I ought to do on the occasion? Shall I open the matter to the elector? I am extremely concerned, that the prince should be suspected on my account, and I cannot bear the thought

* When Tetzel was at Leipsic, and had scraped together a great deal of money from all ranks of people, a nobleman who suspected the imposture, put this question to him, "Can you grant absolution for a sin, which a man shall intend to commit in future?" "Yes," replied the frontless commissioner, "but on condition that the proper sum of money be actually paid down." The nobleman instantly produced the sum demanded; and in return, received a diploma sealed and signed by Tetzel, absolving him from the unexplained crime, which he secretly intended to commit. Not long after, when Tetzel was about to leave Leipsic, the nobleman made inquiry respecting the road he would probably travel, waited for him in ambush at a convenient place, attacked and robbed him; then beat him soundly with a stick, sent him back again to Leipsic with his chest empty, and at parting, said: "This is the fault I intended to commit, and for which I have your absolution."—This humorous story may seem scarcely worthy of the dignity of history; but it is recorded by the cautious Seckendorf, and may serve to show the almost incredible lengths to which the popish agents proceeded in the detestable traffic so clearly laid open by this anecdote.

of being the origin of contention among persons of so great dignity."

Luther also published a sermon, preached against indulgences, which Tetzel answered; and this produced a reply from Luther. About the same time, Henry duke of Brunswic, who was afterwards distinguished among the most active enemies of Lutheranism, appeared in the contest; and in a public writing accused Frederic of secretly supporting Luther. The well known character of the elector, for caution and prudence, seems however to have prevented the report from gaining much credit. This prince took extraordinary care not to involve himself unnecessarily in the concerns of Luther. Our intrepid Reformer, in all his opposition to Tetzel, most certainly had no colleague or assistant; and he himself declared, that he never had conversed with the elector Frederic in his whole life.

Luther never did things by halves. Accordingly, as the affair of selling indulgences had laid firm hold of his mind, he could neither quiet his uneasiness nor smother his indignation. He still continued to preach and to write on the same subject, till the end of the year 1517. In the next year he went to Heidelberg, and was courteously received by Wolfgang, the brother of the elector Palatine, who was the scholar of Ecolampadius, a name afterwards renowned among the reformers. Luther had been advised by his friends not to go to Heidelberg, on account of the danger to which he might be exposed. But, as a general assembly of the Augustinian monks had been called at that place, he thought it right to obey his superiors, whatever might be the event. The official business of the assembly was of no great moment; and therefore we need not be surprised that the zealous and active spirit of Luther was not content with barely discharging the duties of his order. A providential opportunity was offered of propagating divine truth, and it behoved him not to neglect it. While, therefore, he remained at this place, he wrote some propositions, in which he opposed the prevailing notions* concerning justification, faith, and works. His capital object in them was to demonstrate

* Seckend. 29. from a MS. Hist. of the Palatine Churches by Altingius.

the doctrine of justification, before God, by faith, and not by our works and deservings. The theses or positions which he intended to defend, were publicly exposed to view in writing, according to custom; and he called upon Leonard Bejar, a monk of the Augustinian order, to be his respondent. The professors of the university disapproved of the controversy; and therefore it was held in the Augustinian monastery. A large concourse of people attended, and a number of the learned bore a part in the disputation. Among the hearers were Martin Bucer, and John Brentius, men afterwards eminent in the work of reformation. These and other persons, who in process of time became celebrated theologians, admired the acuteness, promptitude, and meekness of Luther, were struck with the truths of the Gospel, which were new to their ears, and desired further instruction of him in private. This was the seed-time of the Gospel in the Palatinate; and these were the beginnings of the reformation in that electorate. Luther's disciples cultivated and taught the same doctrines in private, and after a time ventured to teach them publicly in the university.

While the cause of evangelical truth was thus making gradual advances in Germany, two celebrated Romanists, Eckius of Ingolstadt, and Prierias a Dominican, master of the sacred palace at Rome, took up their pens against the theses of Luther, who by these means was led into a fresh literary contest. Luther published elaborate answers on all the disputed points; and managed this part of the controversy with so much moderation and gentleness, that his inimical historian, Maimbourg, has no way left of reviling the man he dislikes, but by saying, "on this occasion, he acted contrary to his natural disposition." Let the reader infer the real disposition of Luther from authenticated facts, and not from the insinuations of prejudiced papists. At this time he wrote also to his own diocesan, and to his vicar-general. To his diocesan, the bishop of Brandenburg, he declared, that he did not DETERMINE, but DISPUTE, using the liberty allowed to scholastic men in all ages. "I fear not," says he, "bulls and menaces; it is the audaciousness and the ignorance of men, that induce

Luther is
opposed by
Eckius and
by Prierias.

me to stand forth, though with much reluctance: were there not a weighty cause for it, no one, out of my own little sphere, should ever hear of me. If the cause I defend, be not the work of God, I would have nothing to do with it; let it perish. Let him alone have glory, to whom alone glory belongs." He endeavoured to rouse the spirit of his vicar-general, thus: "When I first heard you say, 'that true repentance begins with a love of righteousness, and of God,' the words made a deep and durable impression on my heart, as if they had come by a voice directly from heaven." Hence, he said, he was filled with grief to see the true doctrine of repentance superseded by indulgences. He expressed his great unwillingness to be drawn into the contest; but, being defamed as an enemy of the pope, he felt himself constrained to defend his own character. He therefore begged Staupitius to transmit his trifling writings, as he calls them, to Pope Leo X. that they might speak for him at Rome. "Not," says he, "that I would involve you in my dangers. I desire alone to stand the shock of the contest. Let Christ see to it, whether the cause be mine or his. To the kind admonitions of my friends, who would warn me of danger, my answer is, The poor man has no fears. I protest, that property, reputation, and honours, shall all be of no estimation with me, compared with the defence of truth. I have only a frail body to lose, and that weighed down with constant fatigue. If, in obedience to God, I lose it through violence or fraud, what is the loss of a few hours of life? Sufficient for me is the lovely Redeemer and Advocate, my Lord Jesus Christ, to whose praise I will sing as long as I live."

In a private letter of this kind, written to a friend much older than himself, and whom he honoured as his father, every candid person must see that Luther would open the genuine feelings of his soul. This single fact, therefore, is decisive against the constant, but groundless, assertion of his adversaries, "that he was secretly encouraged and supported in this perilous contest by Staupitius." There is no doubt that both his diocesan and his vicar-general valued him extremely for his talents and piety; nor were either of them destitute of some evangelical light: the

latter especially, as we have seen, had been serviceable to the young Augustine monk in his early conflicts of temptation. But neither the former, nor the latter, had the knowledge, the courage, the faithfulness of Luther.

His controversial writings, published in the year 1518, in explanation and support of the various doctrines he had advanced, are full of important matter, and very much lay open the real state of his mind at that time. And these writings also, such was his regard for ecclesiastical discipline, he thought proper to transmit both to his ordinary and to his vicar-general. Among many other positions maintained in them, are the following: "That every true Christian may become partaker of the grace of Christ without pontifical indulgences. A Christian," says he, "may glory that in Christ he has all things; that all the righteousness and merits of Christ are his own by virtue of that spiritual union with him, which he has by faith: On the other hand, that all his sins are no longer his, but that Christ, through the same union, bears the burthen of them. And this is the confidence of Christians, this is the refreshment of their consciences, that by faith our sins cease to be ours judicially, because they are laid on him the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

Writings of
Luther, in
A.D. 1518.

"I was compelled," continues Luther, "in my conscience to expose the scandalous sale of indulgences. I saw some seduced by them into mischievous errors, others tempted into an audacious profaneness. In a word, the proclaiming and selling of pardons proceeded to such an unbounded licentiousness, that the holy church and its authorities became subjects of open derision in the public taverns. There was no occasion to excite the hatred of mankind against priests to a greater degree. The avarice and profligacy of the clergy had, for many years past, kindled the indignation of the laity. Alas! they have not a particle of respect or honour for the priesthood, except what solely arises from fear of punishment; and I speak plainly, unless their dislike and their objections be attended to and moderated, not by mere power, but by substantial reasons and reformatations, all these evils will grow worse."

From these extracts* the reader will be enabled to form his own judgment of Luther, as a divine, as a statesman, and as an honest man. He wrote a letter to the pope himself, respecting the same transactions, in which he expresses himself in so dutiful and ceremonious a manner, and even in strains of such submissive and prostrate subjection, as sufficiently show, that at that time he was far from meditating a separation from the church of Rome. Maimbourg himself appears to have very much felt the force of Luther's ingenuous declarations and general conduct in these proceedings. He thinks, he probably might have been sincere in his professions of obedience to the Roman See, "because," says he, "it was so contrary to his nature to play the hypocrite for any considerable time together." The same author adds, "Whether he was really sincere, or not, his modest and plausible manner of expressing his doubts, procured him the approbation of many. He was looked on as an honest inquirer after truth, who had detected the frauds of his adversaries, and, in that way, had unjustly brought upon himself the name of heretic†."

The preceding detail of facts and observations unavoidably lead the mind to this conclusion. Luther was far advanced in evangelical knowledge, and appears to have been an experienced Christian some time before he became known to the world. Yet was he still strongly wedded to the habits of superstition; and he slowly admitted the conviction of the antichristian character of the hierarchy. He dreaded the sin of schism: and the impetuous fire of his temper was perpetually checked by the admonitions of conscience, and by the fear of offending his Maker. In this singular character, there was certainly united an assemblage of qualities, rarely found together in the same person; in particular, the greatest caution in conduct with a temper remarkably ardent and choleric. Too often this last betrayed him

* The extracts here given are almost literal translations. But every one, who has been used to the making of extracts, knows, that in many cases where a great deal is omitted for the sake of brevity, it is necessary to add a few words to prevent obscurities. This, however, should always be done with the greatest care, so as not to affect the sense.

† Maimb. p. 28. in Seck.

into a blameable asperity of language, yet seldom does it seem to have influenced his measures or plans of action. The poet's simple, but sublime description of one of his dramatic heroes*, "he feared God, and he feared none besides," is eminently true of the Saxon theologian.

Whoever keeps in view the natural and religious dispositions of Luther, while he contemplates the critical situation of this Reformer, during the suspense of his contest with the papal authorities, cannot fail to conclude, that he must have experienced great anxiety and even perturbation of mind in that memorable season. The precise nature of his feelings will be best understood from his own account of them, in a preface to the edition of his Theses, which was published by himself many years after the termination of the dispute. "I permit," says he, "the publication of my Propositions against Indulgences for this reason, that the greatness of the success may be attributed to God, and that I may not be exalted in mine own eyes. For, by these propositions† it will appear how weak and contemptible I was, and in how fluctuating a state of mind, when I began this business. I found myself involved in it alone, and, as it were, by surprise. And when it became impossible for me to retreat, I made many concessions to the pope; not, however, in many important points; but, certainly, at that time I adored him in earnest. In fact, how despised, and wretched a monk was I then; more like a lifeless body than a human being! Whereas in regard to the pope, how great was his majesty! The potentates of the earth dreaded his nod. How distressed my heart was in that year, 1517, and the following; how submissive my mind was to the hierarchy, not feignedly but really; nay, how I was almost driven to despair, through the agitations of care and fear and doubt, those secure spirits little know, who at this day insult the majesty of the pope with much pride and arrogance! But I, who then alone sustained the danger, was not so certain, not so confident. I was ignorant of many things, which now,

Remarkable
declarations
of Luther.

* Racine, in his *Athaliah*.

† It is not necessary to enter into a detail of these propositions or theses, because the cause of indulgences has now no advocates in this country.

by the grace of God, I understand. I disputed, and I was open to conviction. Not finding satisfaction in the books of theologians and canonists, I wished to consult the living members of the church itself. There were indeed some godly souls, who entirely approved my propositions, but I did not consider their authority as of weight with me in spiritual concerns. The popes, cardinals, bishops, and monks, were the objects of my confidence. I waited for divine instruction with such ardent and continued eagerness, and was so overloaded with cares, that I became almost stupid, or distracted: I scarcely knew when I was asleep, or when awake. At length, after I became enabled to answer every objection that could be brought against me from the Scriptures, one difficulty still remained, and only one; namely, that the CHURCH ought to be obeyed. By the grace of Christ, I at last overcame this difficulty also. Most certainly I had formerly a much greater veneration for the Roman church than those have, who at this day, with a perverse spirit of opposition, extol popery so exceedingly against me."

Let us now listen to a few sentences of Luther, written so late as the year 1545, that is, about twenty-eight years after the beginning of the dispute concerning indulgences*. "Before all things, I entreat you, pious reader, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, to read my writings with cool consideration, and even with much pity. I wish you to know, that when I began the affair of the indulgences at the very first, I was a monk, and a most mad papist. So intoxicated was I, and drenched in papal dogmas, that I would have been most ready at all times to murder, or assist others in murdering, any person who should have uttered a syllable against the duty of obedience to the pope. I was a complete SAUL; and there are many such yet. There were, however, and are now, others, who appear to me to adhere to the pope on the principles of Epicurus; that is, for the sake of indulging their appetites; when secretly they even deride him, and are as cold as ice, if called upon to defend the papacy. I was never one of

Confession
and declara-
tion of Luther,
made in

A. D. 1545.

* Latin preface to the first volume of Luther's Works.

these: I was always a sincere believer; I was always earnest in defending the doctrines I professed; I went seriously to work, as one who had a horrible dread of the day of judgment, and who, from his inmost soul, was anxious for salvation.

“ You will find, therefore, in my earlier writings with how much humility, on many occasions, I gave up very considerable points to the pope, which I now detest as blasphemous and abominable in the highest degree. This ERROR, my slanderers call INCONSISTENCY: but you, pious reader, will have the kindness to make some allowance on account of the times and my inexperience. I stood absolutely alone at first; and certainly I was very unlearned and very unfit to undertake matters of such vast importance. It was by accident, not willingly or by design, that I fell into these violent disputes: I call God to witness!

“ In the year 1517, when I was a young preacher, and dissuaded the people from purchasing indulgences, telling them they might employ their time much better than in listening to the greedy proclaimers of that scandalous article of sale, I felt assured I should have the pope on my side; for he himself, in his public decrees, had condemned the excesses of his agents in that business.

“ My next step was to complain to my own ordinary, and also to the archbishop of Mentz; but I knew not at that time, that half of the money went to this last-mentioned prelate, and the other half to the pope. The remonstrances of a low, mean, poor brother in Christ, had no weight. Thus despised, I published a brief account of the dispute, along with a sermon in the German language on the subject of indulgences; and very soon after I published also explanations of my sentiments, in which, for the honour of the pope, I contended, that the indulgences were not entirely to be condemned, but that real works of charity were of FAR MORE CONSEQUENCE.

“ This was to set the world on fire, and disturb the whole order of the universe. At once and against me single, the whole popedom rose!!”

It will be needless to proceed further with this extract: the account is in entire unison with the preceding one written many years before. The candid and ingenuous

acknowledgments and declarations contained in each of them cannot fail to affect the reader's mind, particularly as they were all made by our Reformer long after the transactions to which they relate, and at times when disguise and misrepresentation could serve no imaginable purpose. A more complete answer to the unwarrantable censures of those, who accuse Luther of selfish motives in promoting the reformation, can scarcely be conceived. But after all, the best use to be made of the information here given is, to admire and adore the providence and grace of that God, WHO IS WONDERFUL IN COUNSEL AND EXCELLENT IN WORKING*.

While the literary contest was carrying on between Luther and his antagonists, there were at Rome those, who blamed the pope for not interesting himself in a controversy, which, by exciting a spirit of resistance, and producing divisions, daily increased in magnitude and importance, and which, in its termination, might prove extremely injurious to the authority of the Romish church. With how much indifference and contempt Leo X. at first beheld the ecclesiastical disputes in Germany, how indolent was the disposition of this pontiff, and how improvident he showed himself in defending the papal jurisdiction, all this appears in the strongest light from the absurd and careless answer which he is said to have given to Silvester

Observation of Leo. X. concerning Luther. Prierias †, when that zealous and learned Dominican showed him some of Luther's heretical publications concerning indulgences. "BROTHER MARTIN," said he, "IS A MAN OF A VERY FINE GENIUS, and these squabbles are the mere effusions of monastic envy." Prierias, however, undertook the support of the pontifical authority; but, in writing against the Reformer, he managed the Romish cause with so much heat and imprudence, that the pope himself presently directed him to be silent in future‡. This writer, in the event, did much service to Lutheranism. In an affair, which required the utmost delicacy, he expressed his sentiments without the least caution or moderation; and exalted the pope's power even far beyond that

* Isaiah xxviii.

† Prierias was master of the sacred palace, and general of his order. He died of the plague in 1523.

‡ Erasm. Epis.

of all general councils. Luther availed himself of the temerity of his adversary, and publicly exposed, with much severity, the odious doctrines which he had inculcated.

In the same year, 1518, a rash author of a similar description, attacked Luther with all the virulence of an enraged and bigoted Roman-catholic. This was Hogostratus, a German Dominican inquisitor, who represented the growing heresy as now become incurable by any of the milder methods.

Luther attacked by
Hogostratus,
A.D. 1518.

Penal and compulsory remedies, he said, were absolutely necessary; and he exhorted the pontiff, by means of the sword and fire, to deliver mankind from the detestable innovator*. Many of the monks† joined in this clamour with incessant vociferation among the people. Scarcely a word came from their mouth, except, Heresy! Blasphemy! Schism! “I relate,” says Erasmus, “what I saw with my own eyes; and I am convinced that no one thing tended more to dispose the people in Luther’s favour, than this imprudent conduct of the clergy. His propositions concerning the indulgences were soberly stated; and if THEY had but argued the points in dispute in the same cool way, these ruinous consequences would never have taken place.”

At length the Roman pontiff was roused from his state of indolence and security. Not only the avaricious vendors of indulgences vociferated against Luther, as Demetrius and the silversmiths did against St. Paul, when their craft was in danger‡, but, from all quarters, complaints of the progress of heresy were sent to Rome. Even the emperor Maximilian I. represented to the pope, how necessary his interference was become. The Augustine monk, he said, was disseminating heretical and destructive doctrines, was obstinate in adhering to his opinions, and active in propagating them; and he had made many converts, even among persons of rank and distinction§.

The imprudence of Leo X. at this critical moment, may seem almost the consequence of judicial infatuation. At once he passed from the extremes of neglect and indifference to those of tyrannical violence

Rash conduct
of Leo X.

* Maimb. p. 38.

† Erasm. Epis.

‡ Acts xix. 24.

§ Maximilian’s Letter. Op. Luth. Vol. I.

and blind temerity. He ordered Luther to appear at Rome within sixty days, to answer for himself before certain judges, of whom his antagonist Silvester Prierias was appointed one. Our Reformer took the wisest method to protect himself against the impending storm. He instantly sent an account of the pope's citation to his friend Spalatinus, who was then with the elector Frederic at the diet of Augsburg; and in the strongest terms requested, that, through the interposition of the prince, his cause might be heard in Germany and not at Rome. Frederic the WISE understood the arts and practice of the court of Rome, and was convinced of the propriety, and even the necessity, of seconding Luther's wishes. Accordingly he urged the competency of a German tribunal in an ecclesiastical controversy of that nature; and it seems entirely owing to the address, the penetration, and the firmness of this great prince, that the Roman pontiff at last consented, that cardinal Cajetan, who was then his legate at Augsburg, should take cognizance of the matter. If the delinquent showed proper marks of penitence and submission, he was to be kindly received again into the bosom of the church; but if he refused to appear before his appointed judge, the legate was commissioned then to denounce publicly, against him and his adherents, all the thunders and anathemas of papal indignation*.

Leo X. perceiving how great a favourite Luther was with the elector of Saxony, judged it expedient, by all the means in his power, to secure the support and concurrence of that prince in an affair, which he had now begun to consider as of the greatest moment. For this purpose, he acquainted Frederic, in a polite and affectionate, but very artful epistle, of the measures which he had been compelled to adopt, through the disobedience of an Augustine monk, whose very "order and profession should have perpetually reminded him of the duties of humility and obsequiousness." He styles Luther a son of iniquity, a prevaricator, who boasts of the protection of the elector, but, in fact, reverences no superior whatever. I know, says the pope, he has no ground for representing you as one, who encourages and supports him; nevertheless, I exhort you in the

Leo X. flatters
the elector of
Saxony.

* The Pope's directions to Cajetan, Luther, Op. Vol. I.

Lord, and as you would preserve the reputation and dignity of a good catholic prince, to be on your guard, lest the lustre of your highly honoured ancestors should be in any degree tarnished by this calumny. I know of no blame respecting you ; but I would wish you to avoid the very suspicion of blame, in which the rashness of this man may involve you. He then proceeds : As many learned and religious persons, and in particular, our beloved son, Prierias, the master of our sacred palace, have informed us of the heretical proceedings of Martin Luther, we have ordered him to be called upon to answer for himself ; and for this purpose, we have given **EXPLICIT DIRECTIONS** to cardinal Cajetan, our legate. Lastly, he concludes with a strong exhortation and injunction, that Frederic, in virtue of the holy obedience which he owed to the Roman church, should contribute his utmost to secure the person of Luther, and deliver him up to the power of the holy See : he declared, however, at the same time, that if he was found innocent, he should be dismissed in peace and in favour ; and even if he was guilty, he would exercise clemency towards him largely upon his repentance*.

It is well worthy of notice, that in this epistle, the pope suppresses a very material fact, namely, that Luther had, already and without trial, been condemned at Rome, as a heretic, by the bishop of Ascoli, the auditor of the Apostolic chamber. This clearly appears from the pope's **OWN BRIEF**, which he sent to cardinal Cajetan along with the above-mentioned directions ; and the poor persecuted monk, in his writings, makes several pertinent observations upon the occasion. The pleasantest thing of all, says he, is this : The pope's **BRIEF** is dated August the twenty-third. I was cited and admonished, on the seventh of August, to appear at Rome within sixty days. Thus it is very plain, that, either before the citation was delivered to me, or at most within sixteen days after, the bishop of Ascoli proceeded against me, judged me, and pronounced me an incorrigible heretic. If I should ask, What are become of the sixty days mentioned in the citation delivered to me, which are to be reckoned from the seventh of August, and would end

Inconsistent
conduct of
Leo X.

* Pope's letter to the elector of Saxony. Tom. I. Witt. p. 204.

about the seventh of October? Is it the usage of the pope's court to cite, admonish, accuse, judge, condemn, and pronounce sentence, all on the same day, and especially, when the supposed culprit is at a considerable distance, and totally ignorant of the proceedings? Again, how can they charge me with having abused the pope's kindness, and with persevering obstinately in heresy? Would they be able to give any other answer to these questions, than that, when they fabricated the falsehoods respecting me, they had lost their memory, and stood in need of a few doses of hellebore.

The condemnation of Luther at Rome, previous to his examination before Cajetan, was so important a fact, and implied so much violence and animosity in Leo and his advisers, that it may well be doubted whether our Reformer, intrepid as he was, if he had been acquainted with all the circumstances of his disgrace and danger, would have ventured to have appeared at all at Augsburg. It is clear, from one of his letters to Spalatinus*, that, on his return from that place, he first learnt at Nuremberg the nature and extent of the papal commission to the cardinal, namely, that, already being pronounced a pertinacious heretic, his person was to be secured and kept in safety, till further orders for his removal to Rome.

The elector of Saxony conducted himself throughout this difficult transaction with the most extraordinary discretion. He was determined not to permit Luther to be sent to Rome, where he would be at the mercy of his enraged adversaries; but, for the purpose of carrying this point the more easily, and also in the hope that an accommodation might take place with the Roman See, he promised the pope's legate that he would take effectual care to place the supposed heretic before him, for examination, at Augsburg. We have observed indeed†, that it was part of the pope's instructions to Cajetan, to show every kindness to Luther, provided he came voluntarily to confess his fault and sue for pardon; but, what was to be done in case he should refuse, which was the thing by far the more probable to happen? Luther himself in his account of this matter says, "Every thing, I doubt not, would have been settled

Prudence of
the elector of
Saxony.

* Lib. I. Epist.

† Page 460.

in the most peaceable and affectionate manner, if I would but have written down six letters, REVOCO, I RECANT."

Frederic provided for the safety of his favourite Luther in the following manner. He gave him letters of recommendation to the senate and principal inhabitants of Augsburg; who, instantly on his arrival, exhorted him not to appear before the cardinal, till he had obtained a promise of safe conduct from the emperor, who was then hunting at some distance from the city. Through the influence of these same persons, this important request of safe conduct was granted; and after three days the emperor's council announced to the cardinal, that the public faith was pledged to Luther, and therefore he must take no violent steps against him. The cardinal answered, "It is very well, nevertheless I shall do my duty."

Luther informs us, that during those three days he was constantly pressed, by a very troublesome emissary of Cajetan, to recant. If I would but recant, he said, all would be right. He further relates a curious conversation which took place between himself and this emissary. He came on the third day, and expostulated as follows:

Luther's conversation with an Italian emissary of Cajetan.

Why will you not go to the cardinal? he is waiting to receive you in the kindest manner.

I must listen to the advice of those excellent persons to whom I am recommended by the elector; and they tell me, I must by no means go to him till I have obtained the public faith. The moment THAT is obtained, I am ready to go.

What, said he, evidently in much agitation, Do you think that prince Frederic will take up arms on your account?

It is very far from my wish.

Where do you mean to stay?

In the open air.

Pray, suppose you had the pope and his cardinals all in your power, what would you do with them?

I would treat them with the greatest respect and honour.

So; said he, waving his hand in the Italian manner, and went away, and returned no more*.

* Luth. Præf.

A short time before these transactions at Augsburg, the celebrated Melancthon had been received as Greek professor at the university of Wittemberg, in the twenty-second year of his age. The lectures of this truly learned and good man, together with those of Luther, were attended by crowds of students ; and the university of Leipsic, a city wholly under Roman influence, on account of the principles of its sovereign, George of Saxony, declined in its lustre. The consequence was, that Luther became still more odious to the hierarchy. Add to this, his defence of his theses, and a sermon against the abuses of officials in excommunications, just published, had exasperated his adversaries to the highest degree. We learn, from his letters to Staupitius and Spalatinus, what were the feelings and reflections of our hero at this alarming conjuncture. To the former he said, “ Doubt not but I mean to be free in searching and handling the word of God. These citations and menaces move me not.” To the latter he writes thus : “ From the bottom of my heart, I wish not to involve the elector in my perils. There is but one thing, which I hope he may be able to do for me,—namely, to prevent any violence on my person. And if he cannot do even that conveniently, I would have all the danger to be my own.—What I have undertaken to defend, I trust, I shall defend effectually. It may be found necessary to pay some regard to self-preservation, but a regard to truth is paramount to every consideration.” This is the language of one, who was well instructed in Christian principles, and knew the practice of holy men in the purest times.

Certainly, at first, Luther seems to have doubted whether he should not be guilty of an unjustifiable temerity, in stirring a single step towards Augsburg, without the previous grant of a safe conduct. But his scruples were done away by the generous behaviour of the elector. This excellent prince not only gave him the above-mentioned letters of recommendation, but also furnished him with money for his journey ; informed him, by Spalatinus, that he might proceed to Augsburg, without need of a safe conduct, such was the legate's benevolent intentions

towards him; and encouraged him to believe that, whatever might happen, he would not permit him to be dragged to the papal tribunal at Rome. It is most probable, however, that Frederic the wise either foresaw the effect which his letters of recommendation would produce at Augsburg, or had otherwise secretly provided that the public faith should be engaged for the persecuted Reformer. He was a prince, says Luther *, of incredible capacity and penetration, and was accustomed to take effectual measures for disconcerting the Romanists, long before they entertained the least suspicion that he was aware of their designs. It was much against the inclination of Cajetan, that the emperor Maximilian granted a safe conduct on this occasion. That irritated legate wrote to Frederic, and in much anger informed him, that he had expressly told the imperial council he would not have the name of Cajetan mentioned in that part of the transaction †. He is usually called Cajetan, though his real name was Thomas de Vio, of the town of Cajeta. He is allowed by Luther himself to have been naturally a man of a benevolent temper. Yet the choosing of this cardinal for the purpose of reconciling matters must not be produced as an example of discretion in Leo X. Thomas de Vio was excessively superstitious, and also entertained the most lofty ideas of papal authority. He wrote a book on the power of the Roman pontiff, which is said to have procured for him the archbishopric of Palermo and a cardinal's hat. Add to all this, he was a Dominican, and consequently the declared enemy of Luther and the friend of Tetzels. Such a person was ill fitted to sit as judge or arbitrator in this nice and perilous controversy.

At the first interview, Luther prostrated himself before the cardinal, and was courteously received. But, at the same time, he was required to retract his errors, to avoid them in future, and to abstain from every thing which might disturb the peace of the church. And these three things were stated expressly to be the order of the most holy pope. Luther

Luther appears before cardinal Cajetan.

* Luther. Op. Vol. I.

† Epist. Cajet. ad Sax. duc. Father Paul, C. Trent, B. 1.

desired that he might be permitted to see the pope's BRIEF. But this request was peremptorily refused*.

The heaviest charge against him seems to have been, that he had transgressed the bull of Clement VI. which had defined the nature and extent of indulgences; and it may easily be conceived, with how much indignation the cardinal would hear the defence of Luther, namely, that the Holy Scriptures, which he could produce in support of his own doctrines, had abundantly more weight with him than a pontifical bull, which in fact proved nothing, but merely recited the opinion of Thomas Aquinas.—Cajetan, in answer, exalted the authority of the pope above all councils, above the church, and even above the Scriptures themselves. To this Luther opposed the appeal of the university of Paris, whose reputation had always stood high, as the parent of science, and the defender of the purest Christianity. Cajetan, in a rage, declared that the Parisians would meet with due punishment; and that Gerson †, whose writings Luther had quoted, was DAMNED, together with all his followers. So extravagantly high were the ideas of papal power conceived by this cardinal, that even the very moderate contradiction, given in France to the pontiff, appeared in his eyes an unpardonable sin. Little did he then imagine how much more openly his magnificent lord and master was to be opposed within the short space of a few months.

Frowns and menaces were by no means adapted to intimidate the determined mind of the Saxon Reformer. He continued to insist on the authority of Scripture. He owned he might have erred, but he thought it reason-

* This important circumstance is not taken notice of by the ecclesiastical historians; though I find Luther himself in his celebrated letter to the elector of Saxony, written after the conference with Cajetan, uses the words, "nam exemplar BREVIS petenti denegabat." Dominus Legatus. It is easy enough to understand why the legate, who was affecting to treat Luther with the greatest kindness, should not choose to show him a BRIEF, in which it appeared, that, at that very moment, he stood condemned as a heretic at Rome, though he had never been heard. On a view of all the circumstances, it seems by no means improbable, that the cardinal, pursuant to his instructions, was intending to make the poor heretic a prisoner, notwithstanding the emperor's promise of safe conduct. But a sight of the BRIEF could not have failed to alarm and put on his guard any man in so critical a situation.

† The reader will remember, that this celebrated chancellor of the university of Paris maintained, at the council of Constance, the superiority of a general council over the pope.

able that his errors should be pointed out, on SCRIPTURAL grounds, before he should be required to retract.

When Luther found that not the smallest progress was made by conversation with the cardinal, and that all his fine promises of kind treatment amounted precisely to this, "you must either recant, or suffer punishment," he wisely determined to commit his answers to writing. In so doing, says he, the oppressed find comfort in two ways; in the first place, what is written, may be submitted to the judgment of others; and in the second, one has a better opportunity of working upon the fears and the conscience of an arrogant despot, who would otherwise overpower one by his imperious language*.

Agreeably to this resolution, he appeared before the cardinal with a notary and witnesses, repeated his protestations of general obedience to the church, and his perfect readiness to recant any error of which he could be convicted. Cajetan replied with so much acrimony, that the accused monk had no opportunity of explaining or of vindicating his sentiments. He absolutely refused to dispute with Luther, either in public or in private; he would not even consent that a single word of his own answers should be put down in writing. He continued to press for a recantation.

Staupitius, who was present at the scene, and who hitherto had acted the part of a steady friend of Luther, rose up, and entreated the legate to permit the accused to return his answers at length in writing. To which request, he, with great difficulty, at last acceded.

At the next conference, Luther exhibited his written explanation and defence, which the cardinal treated with the greatest contempt. He told him, he had filled his paper with passages of Scripture, which were irrelevant, and in general, that his answers were those of a perfect idiot. He condescended, however, to say, he would send them to Rome. Lastly, he ordered Luther to depart, and to come no more into his sight, unless he was disposed to recant.

Notwithstanding this rough treatment, it was Luther's firm opinion, that it would have given the cardinal great

* Luther's Letter to Fred.

pleasure to hear him recant. It may be thought some confirmation of this sentiment, that in the evening of the very day in which this last conference took place, he sent for the vicar-general Staupitius, and desired him to persuade his young monk to retract. Staupitius promised to do his utmost. "You must answer his scriptural arguments," said Cajetan. Staupitius replied ingenuously, "That is above my power. I am his inferior both in capacity and in knowledge of the Scriptures."

Throughout this whole conference at Augsburg, cardinal Cajetan appears to have been conscious how ill qualified he was to enter the lists with Luther, as a disputant in theological questions. Indeed the doctrines of the Gospel, as far as we can judge, gave him little concern. His anxiety was, how he might best insure obedience to the pontifical mandates. He inquired not whether these mandates were reasonable or repugnant to Scripture, it was sufficient for him to know that they were the dictates of a pope. The decretal of pope Clement VI. which he urged with so much heat and positiveness against Luther in the dispute respecting indulgences, maintained, that "One drop of Christ's blood being sufficient to redeem the whole human race, the remaining quantity, that was shed in the garden and upon the cross, was left as a legacy to the church, to be A TREASURE FROM WHENCE INDULGENCES were to be drawn and administered by the Roman pontiffs*." The Augustine monk had, for some time past, been too much enlightened to digest such wild superstitious inventions; and the man who could call upon him, upon these grounds, to renounce his errors, was not to be reasoned with. Still it required extraordinary courage to deliver in a formal protest against the belief of tenets, which at that time were both established by the highest authority, and also supposed to have been dictated by an infallible judgment.

Some objections were made to Luther's ideas of justification by faith; but Cajetan did not scruple to confess, The terms of reconciliation. that if he would but have retracted his opposition to the indulgences, all other differences might have been composed in an amicable manner; and

* Maclaine in Mosheim, Vol. II. Chap. II.

that his opinions concerning the efficacy of faith in justification and in the sacrament, admitted of being modified and interpreted, so as to be inoffensive. When Staupitius was informed of this circumstance, he expressed a wish, that the cardinal had avowed that sentiment in the presence of the notary and the witnesses; Because then, said he, there would have been clear proof that, at Rome, MONEY was held in greater estimation than FAITH.

Luther, on the contrary, considered the scripture-doctrine of justification by faith as of infinite importance. He declared, that he would rather retract every thing which he had said upon other subjects, than THAT, which he must adhere to with his dying breath. That in regard to indulgences, their intrinsic nature, whatever it might be, could not be altered by ostentatious praises and honours, but that if he gave up the article of justification by faith, he should, in fact, deny Jesus Christ himself. That, though the cardinal had promised to conduct the inquiry according to the Sacred Scriptures, and the rules of the church, he had not produced a single text of Scripture against him, nor any one authority from the holy fathers. Lastly, That he was confident no answer could ever be given to the scriptural arguments and the authorities, which he had produced in support of the doctrine in question*. Our peace, says he, consists in coming to Christ in lively faith: if a man believe not the promise, he may practise confession to all the world, and he may be absolved a thousand thousand times even by the pope himself, but he will never obtain, on good grounds, a quiet conscience†.

It was on Friday the fourteenth of October 1518, that Luther made his last appearance before the pope's legate. A report was spread, that, notwithstanding the engagement of a safe conduct, he was to be seized and confined in irons. He remained, however, at Augsburg till the succeeding Monday. He heard nothing from the cardinal. How great must have been his anxiety! On the Monday, by a letter couched in the most respectful terms, he begged pardon for any irreverent or unbecoming language towards the

Dangerous
situation of
Luther, in
A. D. 1518.

* Epist. ad Fred.

† Resolut. de Indulg.

pontiff, which might have escaped him in the heat and hurry of the debate; he even promised to desist from treating the subject of indulgences any more, provided his antagonists were enjoined to observe a similar silence. But to retract his sentiment, or give up the truth, he absolutely refused. He said, his conscience would not permit him to act in that manner. He acknowledged that his friends, and especially his vicar-general, had taken great pains to make him think humbly, submit his own opinion, and form a right judgment: But, said he, neither the favour nor the advice, nor the command of any man, ought ever to make me do or say what is contrary to my conscience. To this letter he received no answer.

On the next day he sent another letter to Cajetan, expressed in more spirited language and nearer to his usual strain. “He conceived he had done every thing which became an obedient son of the church. He had undertaken a long and dangerous journey; he was a man of a weak body, and had very little money to spend. He had laid the book, which contained his opinions, at the feet of his holiness the pope; he had appeared before his most reverend father the cardinal; and he was now waiting to be instructed how far he was right in his opinions, and how far wrong.—It could no longer serve any good purpose to spend his time there, and be a burden to his friends. He was really in want of money. Besides, the cardinal had told him, *vivâ voce*, to come no more into his sight, unless he would recant;” and, said Luther, “In my former letter I have distinctly pointed out all the recantation I can possibly make.” He then signified his positive determination to leave the place; but not before he had formally appealed from the pope’s legate, nay, from the pope himself, “ill informed, to the same most holy Leo X. that he might be better informed.” In prosecuting this appeal, he confessed that he acted rather from the judgment of some persons of distinction than from his own. If he had been left entirely to himself, he should have thought an appeal unnecessary in this case. He wished to refer every thing to the determination of the church. What could he do more?—He was not a contentious adversary, but a tract-

able scholar. Even the elector Frederic, he knew, would be better pleased with his appeal than his recantation. He therefore besought the cardinal to consider both his departure and his appeal as the effect of necessity and of the authority of his friends. They said, WHAT will you retract? Is YOUR retractation to be the rule of OUR FAITH? If any thing, which you have advanced, is to be condemned, let the church decide and do you obey. This reasoning, in his mind, was irresistible.

Luther waited four whole days, reckoning from the day of his dismissal by the cardinal; and still received no further orders. The suspense was extremely Anxiety of Luther. afflicting; and both himself and his friends began to suspect that this TOTAL SILENCE portended violence to his person. To prevent being seized and imprisoned, he quitted Augsburg very early in the He quits Augsburg. morning of the nineteenth* of October 1518. A friendly senator ordered the gates of the city to be opened, and he mounted a horse, which Staupitius had procured for him. He had neither boots nor spurs, nor sword; and he was so fatigued with that day's journey, that when he descended from his horse, he was not able to stand, but fell down instantly among the straw in the stable†. He had, however, taken care before his departure, that every thing relative to his appeal should be done in a proper manner and in the presence of a notary public.

Such was the conclusion of the conferences at Augsburg, in which the firmness and plain dealing of Luther was no less conspicuous than the unreasonable and imperious behaviour of the cardinal.

Whatever might be the cause of that SILENCE for several days, on the part of Cajetan, which our Reformer and his friends beheld with so much just suspicion and jealousy; whether the legate still hoped to bring the affair to a happy termination by the milder methods of influence and persuasion; or whether his ambiguous con-

* Some historians say, this happened on the 20th of October, others on the 18th; but I think Luther's own account of the proceedings at Augsburg show that he must have left that city on the 19th. It is unnecessary to trouble the reader further respecting a matter of so little consequence.

† Tom. 1. Altemb. p. 150.—Paul Sarpi says, what is not at all improbable, that Luther had John Huss's case in his head.

duct is best explained on the supposition that he was intending to seize the person of Luther, but did not dare to proceed to extremities, in defiance of the imperial grant of safe conduct, without further orders from the Roman See; on almost every imaginable view of his motives, it seems natural to conclude that he must have been much mortified at the sudden departure of Luther. He had neither punished the heretic nor reduced him to submission. The court of Rome would probably be highly displeased when they heard of his escape; and, in their disappointment, would be apt to forget the difficult circumstances under which the cardinal acted, and to attribute both the present and the consequent mischiefs to his bad management. In fact, as soon as the events at Augsburg were known at Rome, the pope's legate was blamed exceedingly for his severe and illiberal treatment of Luther, at the very moment, it was said, when he ought to have promised him great riches, a bishopric, or even a cardinal's hat*.

Cajetan, no doubt, understood the disposition of the court of Rome sufficiently to foresee how harsh a construction would be put upon his conduct in a business which had terminated so unfavourably to their wishes and expectations. In the bitterness of his heart, he complained, to the elector of Saxony, of Luther's insolent and insincere behaviour; and even reproached his highness for supporting such a character. He said, that he had conversed for many hours privately with Staupitius, and one or two more learned friends respecting this business; that his object had been to preserve the dignity of the Apostolic See, without disgracing **BROTHER MARTIN**; and that when he had put matters into such a train as to have reasonable hopes of the success of his plan, he had found himself completely deluded. Martin, his several associates, and his vicar-general, had suddenly disappeared. Martin indeed had written letters, in which he pretended to beg pardon, but he had retracted not one word of the scandalous language he had used. Lastly, Cajetan warned the prince to consider, how much he was bound in honour and conscience, either to send

Cajetan complains to the elector.

* Father Paul.

brother Martin to Rome, or to banish him from his dominions. As to himself, he said, he had washed his hands of so pestilential a business, but his highness might be assured the cause would go on at Rome. It was too important to be passed over in silence*; and he entreated him not to sully the glory of himself and his illustrious house, for the sake of a paltry mendicant monk.

Every pious reader will lament the effect which these turbulent and contentious scenes produced upon the mind of the venerable Staupitius. It should seem, that partly an apprehension of danger, and partly his private conversation with cardinal Cajetan, influenced this good man to leave his friend, withdraw all further opposition to the popedom, and retire to Saltzburg. Our more determined and adventurous Reformer did not hesitate to tell him, that “he stuck fast between Christ and the pope †.” Let us hope, however, that this judgment of Luther was of the harsher sort; and that, in passing it, sufficient allowances were not made for the different tempers and ages of men, and for inveterate habits.

Two reasons induce me to conclude with certainty, that Staupitius acted towards Luther with perfect faithfulness at Augsburg. First, it is beyond all dispute, that he affronted Cajetan by leaving that place suddenly and without taking leave; which he would never have done, if he had betrayed his friend by dishonourably entering into any plans for seizing his person. Secondly, by way of encouraging the persecuted monk in his difficult circumstances, he used this language to him, “Remember, my brother, you undertook this business in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Luther himself, three years afterwards, owned these precious words “sunk deep into his mind.” The truth is, this reverend vicar-general was a man of a timid temper, and well advanced in years; also his views of the Gospel were far from being bright or distinct; and lastly, the prospect of peace with the hierarchy, at least at Wittemberg, was extremely gloomy.

Moreover, we cannot doubt but the pope’s legate, in his private conversation with Staupitius, would use both conciliatory and threatening language. Each would tend

* Luth. Op. Vol. I. The letter is dated Oct. 25, 1518. † Lib. I. ep.

to shake the resolution of such a man. And besides the direct and immediate effect of that conversation on the mind of the timorous vicar-general, we may fairly trace some other important consequences to the same origin. While he was agitated with the discussion, and perhaps yielding to the legate's menaces and advice, he exhorted his less pliable monk to exhibit to his superiors some plainer marks of obedience and humility. The firm temper of Luther, which had resisted the imperious dictates of a haughty cardinal, instantly relented under the entreaties of a mild and affectionate friend. Hence, that submissive letter, which our Reformer wrote to Cajetan* on Monday the seventeenth of October; and hence those apologies and concessions which are contained in it, to the very limit of what his conscience would permit. Probably no part of his own conduct, on a review of the proceedings at Augsburg, would afford him less satisfaction than this; and though Luther never reproached Staupitius for having recommended so extremely injudicious and suppliant a measure, yet the latter might possibly observe in the former some dissatisfaction on that account; and, at any rate, he could not fail to be convinced, from many circumstances, that his own disposition was not calculated, like that of his friend, to encounter such difficulties and hazards as were likely to arise in a righteous and determined opposition to the popedom. These considerations may help further to explain, why it might not be disagreeable to Staupitius to remove from Wittemberg, and thereby avoid the dangerous fellowship and importunities of a man, who, in his opinion, was apt to be impetuous and turbulent in his public conduct.

But perhaps the circumstance, which may be thought most unfavourable to the reputation of Staupitius, is, that, Staupitius is made an abbot, in the year 1523, we find him preferred to an abbacy at Saltzburg. Luther's affectionate regard and veneration for his vicar-general, restrained him from saying any thing harsh or severe on this occasion, but he could not dissemble his doubts and anxieties respecting the consequences of this preferment.

* Pages 469, 470.

We will conclude this chapter with two valuable extracts of his letters. The first is dated 1522, and is an answer to a letter received from Staupitius, at a time when Luther had heard an unfounded rumour, that his friend was actually made an abbot.

“The report of your being made an abbot is so general, that if I had not received your own letter in contradiction, I must have been compelled to believe it. Luther to Staupitius. It is, I suppose, in the same way that you receive UNTRUTHS concerning me. May the providence of God attend you! but, I confess, my plain understanding does not point out to me, how it can be advisable for you to accept an abbacy at this time. I would not, however, interfere with your judgment. One thing I entreat you, by the bowels of Christ, not readily to believe those who calumniate me. In regard to what you inform me, that my doctrines are the delight of debauchees, and that many scandalous practices have been the consequence of my recent publications, I am neither afraid of such censorious representations, nor surprised to hear of them. Certainly I have laboured, and am labouring, that the pure WORD of God may be spread abroad without tumult. But you know that I am not master of events. My object has been to attack, by means of the written word, that system of impieties, which hath been introduced in opposition to sound doctrine. The abominations, my father, the abominations of the pope, with his whole kingdom, must be destroyed. And the Lord does this ‘without hand*,’ by the WORD alone. The subject exceeds all human comprehension; and, therefore, we need not wonder that great commotions, scandals, and even prodigies, should arise. Let not these things disturb you, my father. I cherish the best hopes. The counsel and the stretched-out arm of God is plain in this matter. Remember how my cause from the very first gave the highest offence to the world, and yet it hath continually prevailed. Satan feels his wound: hence he rages the more, and endeavours to throw all into confusion.”

The second letter, dated 1523, is addressed to the reverend abbot of St. Peter's in Saltzburg.

* Dan. viii. 25.

“ Reverend father, Your silence is unkind. But though I cease to find favour in your eyes, I ought never to forget you, through whose means, the light of the Gospel first dawned in my heart. I must tell you the truth ; it would have been more agreeable to me, if you had not been appointed an abbot : but since it is so, let neither of us interfere with our respective rights of private judgment. Your best friends are sorry for your leaving us, but still much more sorry that you are so near the infamous cardinal Langius, and that you will be compelled to bear in silence all his outrageous behaviour. I shall wonder if you are not in danger of denying Christ. . . . We still hope the best of you, though your long silence disheartens us. If you are become another man, which may Christ forbid ! I speak plainly, I shall throw away no more words, but have recourse to prayer, that God may be pleased to show mercy upon you, and us all. You observe, reverend father, how doubtfully I express myself. The reason is, your long silence leaves us ignorant of the disposition of your mind ; whereas you very well know our most secret thoughts and wishes. Permit me, however, to speak positively on one point,—We are confident, that we are not really objects of your contempt, even though you should dislike all our proceedings. I shall not cease to pray that you may be as much estranged from the popedom, as I am at this moment, and, indeed, as you were formerly. May the Lord hear me, and take you and us to himself.”

These letters may deserve the reader's diligent consideration. They throw light on the general character both of the writer and of his friend : they intimate an evident progress of knowledge, in Luther's mind, respecting the nature of the papacy, which took place between the years 1518 and 1523 : they manifest the strength of divine grace, which enabled him to withstand that threatening storm which alarmed Staupitius, and drove him into a dishonourable shelter : and, lastly, they compel the mind to entertain painful fears and conjectures respecting the perfect uprightness of the new abbot of Saltzburg, however we may be inclined to indulge cheerful hopes, that at the last day he will be found not to have gone

the length of actually denying his Lord and Master.—
Staupitius enjoyed his abbacy only for a very short time.
He died in the year 1524.

CHAP. IV.

THE CONTROVERSY CONTINUED.—THE ATTEMPTS OF MILTITZ
AND OF ECKIUS.

THE condition of Luther, after his return to Wittemberg, was peculiarly afflictive. Before himself he saw the total ruin of his worldly circumstances, the hardships of poverty and of exile, and the fear of a violent death from papal vengeance. He was not without hope of the protection of the elector, partly from the well-known justice and humanity of that prince's character, and partly from the good offices of his secretary Spalatinus. Moreover, as yet, the interference of Frederic in the ecclesiastical controversy had not only been firm and discreet, but also as spirited and friendly as could reasonably be expected in behalf of one who was looked on by the hierarchy as a turbulent and an abandoned heretic. Still it behoved our Reformer not to be over-confident in his expectations of future support. He had abundant cause to be thankful for the past exertions of his prince, which had been found so useful and effective; but trying times were coming on apace. Every day the contest grew more and more perilous. Luther himself had a single eye to the prosperity of the kingdom of Christ; but he could not be answerable for the zeal or the perseverance of others: he was well acquainted with the human heart; and he foresaw that political and secular concerns might clash with the interests of the Gospel. He would not wonder if the love of many began to wax cold*; even his much esteemed friend Staupitius had already quitted Saxony; and, though the elector had hitherto manfully defended him against the tyrannical machinations of the court of Rome, it might well be doubted, whether the

* Matt. xii.

chief motives of this magnanimous conduct were a regard for the honour of God and the religion of Jesus*.

It was an excellent part of Luther's character, that in the most critical and difficult situations he could commit his cause to the God whom he served, with firm and entire reliance on HIS WILL; and at the same time be as active and indefatigable in using all prudential means, as if the events depended solely on human exertions. In his present danger and perplexity, he cast his eyes on France, where formerly some opposition had been made to the fulness of papal domination; and where he hoped that he might profess and preach divine truth with greater security than in Germany. "Not," said he in a letter to Spalatinus, "that I care much on my own account; for in fact, I am concerned, that I should not be thought worthy to suffer for the truth; especially, as by going to Augsburg, I exposed myself to many dangers, and almost tempted God to bring evil upon me. It grieves me, however, to see the fair prospect of our rising seminary thus suddenly clouded, and the studies of the young men at Wittemberg, who are wonderfully zealous for the acquisition of sacred literature, blasted in the bud."—In another letter to the same friend, he said, "Every day I expect from Rome the arrival of the ecclesiastical anathemas; and I am, therefore, disposing my affairs in such a manner, that when those curses shall arrive, I may be ready, like Abraham, to depart, not knowing whither. Yet, in another sense, I do know whither I shall go, for God is every where. However, I leave you this farewell letter. See

* Some account of the religious character of the elector was given in page 432 of this Volume. Seckendorf doubts whether his principal reason for supporting Luther, who was then the public teacher of divinity and philosophy in the university of Wittemberg, might not be the ardent desire which that prince always showed for the prosperity of his favourite seminary of learning. Be this as it may, it is certain, that even before the conferences at Augsburg, in a letter to cardinal Raphael, he expressed himself with great coolness and indifference respecting the DOCTRINES of Luther. "I have never," says he, "taken upon me to defend either the writings or the sermons of Dr. Martin L. and I proved the same, which I now assert, both to Cajetan the pope's legate and to Miltitz his nuncio." Some authors consider this as a confession on the part of Frederic, that he had not so much as read a line of Luther's publications, or heard him deliver his sermons: Others suppose that, in his concerns with the papal agents, he might dissemble his regard for the Reformer, with a view of supporting him and his cause more effectually in the end. Luth. Op. Witt. Vol. I. p. 228.

that you have the courage to read the letter of a man excommunicated and accursed!" In a third letter he declared, he was ready either to go or stay. "Some friends," said he, "advise me to deliver myself up to the elector, who will protect me in some safe place, and at the same time inform the pope's legate, that my person is under confinement, and that I am ready to give answers to such questions as shall be proposed to me. I commit this plan to your prudence. I am in the hands of God and of my friends. It vexes me to think, that it should be so commonly believed, that the prince in secret supports me. This report, if any thing can, will drive me hence, that I may not involve him in my dangers. To be brief: while I remain here, my liberty, both of writing and of speaking, is very much restrained; whereas, if I leave Germany, I will open my heart to the world, and offer up my life freely in the service of Christ."

Those who have most considered how great a trial, to a thoughtful mind, a state of suspense is in dangerous and critical seasons, will form the best judgment of Luther's situation towards the end of the year 1518. The foregoing extracts lay open his secret feelings and resolutions, at the same time that they also exhibit his extraordinary faith, patience, and resignation.

In this conjuncture, the elector of Saxony signified his earnest wish that Luther would not leave Wittemberg*. This spirited resolution is to be ascribed, partly to the interference and supplication of the university of that place in behalf of their beloved professor, and partly to the imperious and threatening language of cardinal Cajetan†. Frederic, with a calmness and dignity suitable to his character, declared that he could not expel Luther from Wittemberg, without doing much injury to his university, and further, that he should not consider him as a heretic till he had been heard and was convicted. Animated with this favourable determination of the prince, the professor of theology resolved to remain on the spot; and, in a discourse from the pulpit, he requested the people, in case his person should at length become the

The elector of Saxony, in A. D. 1518, desires Luther not to leave Wittemberg.

* Melch. Adam.

† Pages 472, 473.

victim of papal severity, not to harbour the least ill-will against the pope or any human being whatever, but to commit the cause to God.

It will be proper to mention here, that besides the literary and controversial employments of the professor at Wittemberg, he had for some time discharged the office of pastor of the same town, as the substitute of Simon Heinsius, the ordinary minister, who then laboured under bodily infirmities ; and thus this industrious Reformer supported at once the character of a theological teacher and disputant, and also of a popular preacher and parochial clergyman.

Luther foreseeing the manner in which he should probably be treated at Rome, and desirous of anticipating the papal censures, of which he was in daily expectation, had recourse to the wise expedient of appealing formally to a general council. In the instrument of his appeal, he still professes obedience to the authority of the Apostolic See ; but as the pope was only a man, and, like other men, liable to err, and as St. Peter, the most holy of all his predecessors, had actually erred, he appealed to the next general council, which, when legally assembled, was a power superior to that of the pope, and could afford redress to the oppressed.

It soon appeared, that Luther was not mistaken in his conjectures respecting the intentions of the Romish court. His appeal to a future council is dated November 28, 1518. But Leo. X. without mentioning the name of Luther, on the 9th of November of the same year issued a bull, in which he confirmed the doctrine of indulgences in the most absolute manner. By this step, no less improvident than impious, he put it out of the power of the friends of the papacy to vindicate or even to extenuate its conduct. The grossest venality and contempt of true piety and salutary discipline had prevailed in Germany, through the sale of indulgences. To maintain the rectitude of the practice, without the least correction of excesses, at a time when the memory of the transactions was recent, prevented every attempt that might be made to reconcile Luther to the hierarchy. The providence of

Luther
appeals to
a general
council.

God was admirable in thus barring up his return to the church of Rome, while, as yet, he was far from being convinced of the totally antichristian state of the popedom*.

But the mercenary prostitution of indulgences had not been confined to Germany. In the summer of this same year 1518, Samson, a Franciscan of Milan, came to Zurich, to prosecute the scandalous traffic. There he was opposed by Huldric Zuinglius, afterwards the famous Swiss Reformer †. In the month of September, Samson

The sale of indulgence at Zurich opposed by Zuinglius, in 1518.

came to Zug, where a servant seeing the people press in crowds, addressed them : “ Be not so importunate, I beseech you ; let those enter first, who are furnished with money ; care shall be taken afterwards of the poor ‡.” At Bern, the enormities exceeded, if possible, those which had been practised in Germany. When the sale of the indulgences was over, BAPTISMAL INNOCENCE was restored to all present, who should confess their sins, and thrice recite the Lord’s prayer and the Angelic salutation : Those also, who thrice went round the great church daily, repeating prayers, might free what souls they pleased from purgatory. Still grosser corruptions than these were practised. But the infatuation of the hierarchy was incurable. Evangelical light and liberty were fast advancing to the relief both of Germany and Switzerland, yet the rulers of the church shut their eyes, and hardened their hearts. Scarcely roused from a state of shameful sloth and sensuality, they seem to have instantly fallen into the opposite extreme of blind presumption and impetuous rage. Pride, rashness, and a most tyrannical ambition, appeared in all their councils.

During the whole progress of the reformation, the pious reader has reason to admire the providential circumstances, which, both in succession and in concurrence, favoured the happy deliverance of the nations from papal captivity. We have just seen how the late haughty conduct of Cajetan tended to fix the mind of Frederic more steadily in

* Op. Luth. I. 217—232. Wit. Luther’s first appeal, mentioned in p. 470, was dated Oct. 16, 1518.

† Father Paul, B. I. p. 8.

‡ Page 60. Seckendorf.—Hottinger.

the interests of the Reformer; and this was a consequence which proved extremely influential upon the subsequent events. Immediately this wise prince solicited the emperor to exert all his authority at Rome, that the present ecclesiastical controversy might be settled in Germany by impartial judges. What would have been the ultimate effect of this prudent step, we are unable to say. Maximilian

Death of Maximilian, A.D. 1519. died in the beginning of the year 1519; and during the INTERREGNUM the prince elector, duke of Saxony, as vicar of the empire, possessed sufficient power to protect and cherish Lutheranism in its infancy.

“The violent tempest,” says Luther, “subsided by little and little; and the pontifical thunders of excommunication were gradually more and more despised*.”

A letter of Erasmus written to the Elector of Saxony, A.D. 1519. The resolutions of Frederic were not a little confirmed by a letter which he received in the spring of 1519, from the learned Erasmus. Brevity does not permit me to present

the reader with this elegant composition, in which the writer manages his subject with wonderful address, dexterity, and politeness. By the following answer, however, a judgment may be formed both of the matter contained in it, and also of the effect it produced on the mind of the prince.

“The elector, duke of Saxony, to Erasmus: It gives me the greatest satisfaction to be informed by you, that Lutheranism is not disapproved by the learned, and that the writings of doctor Martin are read

The Elector's answer. with the greatest avidity. He is a person almost unanimously admired, at home and abroad, both for the integrity of his life, and for his solid erudition. That he has remained hitherto in Saxony under our protection, is indeed owing rather to the just cause he defends, than to the man himself.—Nothing can be more contrary to our principles, than to suffer a man, who has deserved reward, to be oppressed and punished: Nor, with the help of Almighty God, will we ever allow an innocent person to become a victim to the selfish malice of the wicked.”

The court of Rome, finding it impossible to stop the proceedings of Luther, by mere authority and threaten-

* Luth. Op. Præf.

ing, had now recourse to the arts of negotiation. The haughty pontiff had become sensible of his imprudence in having entrusted the management of the controversy to such a commissioner as Cajetan; but we shall soon see, that still he had learnt no lessons of true wisdom and moderation, from

The pope sends a new legate named Miltitz, into Germany.

what happened at Augsburg. He condescended indeed to employ a person of a different stamp; one, who by his insinuating manners and gentle treatment of the Reformer, raised considerable expectations of at least a temporary peace; but, happily for the reformation, this judicious and temperate policy was presently succeeded by measures most unaccountably imprudent and disgusting. This new legate was Charles Miltitz, a Saxon knight, who, as a lay character, might be supposed less under the dominion of party and prejudice, than the Dominican cardinal, his predecessor. He was commissioned to present to the elector Frederic the golden consecrated ROSE*; and, if possible, to put an end to all the ecclesiastical disputes which had produced the rupture between Luther and the Roman See. Frederic had formerly solicited the favour of the ROSE with much earnestness; but on this occasion, he is said to have received it with a cool and almost contemptuous politeness; and in nowise could he be induced to change his measures respecting his favourite Professor of Wittemberg.

Miltitz, thus foiled in his attempts to influence the mind of the prince elector, repaired to Leipsic, and there finding Tetzel, he twice rebuked him with the greatest severity before his own Provincial†, on account of his iniquitous practices in the business of indulgences. It appears from Miltitz's own letters, that as he passed through Germany, he had obtained perfect intelligence of the frauds and private vices of Tetzel; and probably he was the more desirous of exposing them, because, by abandoning that audacious Dominican, he imagined he should at once gratify the advocates for reformation, and shelter the Roman pontiff from censure. With Luther himself the new legate had

The new legate rebukes Tetzel.

* This used to be considered as a peculiar mark of the pope's favour and esteem.

† Seck. p. 62.

several conferences, which proved fruitless, as to the essential points : and the only effect of these negotiations in the former part of 1519, seems to have been, that the electors of Saxony and of Treves agreed to defer the complete examination of the matters in dispute to the first German diet of the new emperor Charles V. ; and that, in the mean time, Luther should write a submissive letter to the pope. To this our Reformer readily consented, for he was by no means disposed to break with the pontiff; and it is not improbable he would have continued an obedient subject of the Roman See all his days, if he might have been permitted, without molestation, to discharge the office of a faithful pastor of Christ. The learned translator of Mosheim * seems out of humour with him, for having made “ weak submissions” on this occasion ; and yet he owns that, “ properly speaking, there was no retractation of his former tenets, nor the smallest degree of respect shown to the infamous traffic of indulgences.” If so, every judicious protestant, though he may entirely agree with this excellent writer, that Luther’s “ views were not, as yet, very extensive, his former prejudices entirely dispelled, or his reforming principles steadily fixed †,” may nevertheless maintain that his submissive conduct at this time, taken with all the circumstances which accompanied it, indicated STRENGTH of mind, not weakness, and a spirit of discrimination rather than of blind acquiescence. We ought not to judge of this great man by the feelings and habits of protestants of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

His inimical historian Maimbourg ‡ says, “ his letter to the pope was rather civil than humble, but that it contained nothing to the purpose.” Let the reader judge from the following concise account of it, whether Luther, according to the light which he then possessed, did not take effectual care not to entangle his conscience by any improper concessions.

He said, it was a great grief to him to find himself accused of want of respect to the church of Rome : that his design, in all he had done, was to maintain the honour of that church ; and that, as his writings were now spread throughout all Ger-

He confers
with Luther,
A. D. 1519.

Luther
writes to the
pope.

* Mosh. Vol. II. Chap. II. sect. ix.

† Id.

‡ Sect. 24.

many, he could not retract his assertions without dishonouring the said church: that the persons who really injured the holy See, were the very preachers whom he had opposed: they disgraced their sacred office by the most absurd discourses, and by seeking only to gratify their avarice under the protection of his Holiness. Lastly, he declared, that he was ready to observe silence in future respecting indulgences, provided his adversaries would also forbear their provocations. In concluding, he solemnly protested, that all along he had aimed at nothing but to prevent the mother-church from being polluted by the vile imputation of avarice, and the people from being seduced by a false notion, that the indulgences were preferable to truly benevolent actions *.

Of his personal conferences with Miltitz, the following compressed account is extracted from his own letters, and from the Latin edition of his works. “ Charles Miltitz saw me at Altenburg, and complained, Account of their conferences. that I had united the whole world to myself, and drawn it aside from the pope; that he had discovered this at the inns, as he travelled. ‘Martin,’ said he, ‘I took you for some solitary old theologian; whereas I find you a person in all the vigour of life. Then you are so much favoured with the popular opinion, that I could not expect, with the help of twenty-five thousand soldiers, to force you with me to Rome.’ After this flattery, he entreated me to consult for pacific measures, and promised, that he would endeavour that the pope should do the same. We supped together, and I was treated with the greatest courtesy. I conducted myself in such a manner as if I had not seen through these Italian arts †. I could only promise, that I would do all, which I could do consistently with truth and a good conscience; that I also loved peace, and was driven into these broils by mere necessity. This Charles Miltitz was esteemed a frivolous character, and his advice was frivolous; nevertheless it is my judgment, that if the friends of the papacy and the pope himself had treated me in this manner at first, matters would never have come to so great a rupture. Instead of that, the pope condemned me unheard, and

* Luth. Op. Vol. I.—Du Pin, Cent. 16.

† Italitates;

raged with his BULLS ; and the crafty archbishop of Mentz became the dupe of his own cunning. All the blame is at his door ; for, his sole object in suppressing my doctrine, was to save his own part of the money, which should be collected by the indulgences. But now all the papal plans and attempts are to no purpose. The Lord hath awaked, and stands to judge the people ; and though they slay us, they will not gain their point."

Luther was always distinguished by a spirit of respect and obedience towards his superiors, whether in church or state. In this negotiation with Miltitz, and also in his letter to the pope, we discern much of this spirit, joined to great tenderness of conscience, and an amiable sensibility of temper on account of the humane treatment he had received. Keep in view, that, as yet, he apprehended the papal power to have just foundations, however it might have been abused ; keep in view his own description of his feelings *, penned in moments of the greatest deliberation, and long after the turbulent scenes were passed ; keep in view the state of the rest of mankind in Christendom, and you will acknowledge the Saxon Reformer to have exhibited a rare example of courage and firmness in these memorable transactions. In proposing a compromise of silence on both sides in the affair of indulgences, he may be thought to have acted inconsistently with his former declarations, and to have conceded too much to the hierarchy ; but the answer is, he had already manfully resisted the Roman See in that abominable traffic ; and he began to hesitate how far it was HIS proper business to proceed further in a matter of that sort : In a word, his conscience was at present puzzled respecting the EXTENT of the obedience which he owed to the rulers whose authority he then allowed. Harassed with doubts, and perfectly aware of the danger that threatened him, he would have given the world for a sound and discreet counsellor : of the danger he sought no partner : but alas, his best and wisest friends, when pressed closely concerning the most critical and perilous part of the contest, absolutely stood aloof †. After long and diligent

* Pages 456 and 457.

† After he had conferred with Miltitz, he wrote to his friend Spalatinus ; and he also particularly intreated the elector Frederic, that, for the sake

reflection on the best authenticated facts, and the peculiar situation of Luther, the very doubts which arose in his mind, appear to me, I confess, to imply both extraordinary integrity of principle, and great vigour of intellect.

But whatever were the secret motives of our Reformer, in making his concessions, Leo X. disdained to accept the submission, and open the door of reconcilia-

Absurd
conduct of
Leo X.

tion. The serious reader will not think me troublesome in repeatedly drawing his attention to the kind providence of God, which appeared so remarkably in many particulars of the contest before us. While the Roman pontiff, rejecting counsels of peace, was listening to enraged bigots, greedy Dominicans, and ambitious cardinals, the inquisitive spirit of the humble Professor of Wittemberg, was enabled, by degrees and a constant study of the Scriptures, to acquire a practical conviction that the tyranny of the papal hierarchy was no longer to be endured. Luther's letter to the pope was written in the former part of 1519; and by his two letters to Staupitius, we have seen how much better he understood the true principles of the papal system in 1522 and 1523*. It was undoubtedly this gradual insight into the enormities of the popedom, which co-operating with the infatuation of the pontifical advisers in their unaccountable aversion to healing and pacific measures, raised that general spirit of indignation, and of opposition to the established religion, which at length terminated in the blessed Reformation.

While the pope's nuncio was negotiating a reconciliation in Germany, Tetzel, the wretched subaltern, whose scandalous conduct had so much disgraced his employers, met with the reward, which frequently awaits the ministers of iniquity. He found himself deserted by all the world.

Wretched
situation of
Tetzel.

Miltitz, in particular, had treated him so roughly, that this daring and boisterous instrument of papal avarice and extortion actually fell sick, wasted away, and at last died of a broken heart. A dreadful

His death.

lesson! This unhappy man left the world, as far as ap- of Almighty God, he would use so much clemency towards him, as freely to say, what he wished him to do in the present circumstances. Seck. p. 63.

* Page 475, 476.

pears, destitute of comfort in his own soul, after he had administered a false peace to thousands! It became necessary for those whom he had served to discard him, and he had no resources in his own conscience. The pontiff's displeasure is said to have affected him exceedingly; but we have no evidence that he searched the word of God in true penitence and humility. A little before his death, Luther, hearing of his anguish of mind, and sympathising with him in his distress, wrote to him in the most kind and consolatory strains, and begged him not to be distressed with the recollection of any thing that had passed between them*. If the letter had been extant, we should have found in it, I apprehend, instructions concerning repentance, and warm exhortations to lay hold of the promises of the Gospel. If the French historians, Maimbourg and Varillas, had been acquainted with this fact, they would hardly, one would think, have represented Luther, as a man of a vindictive, implacable temper†.

About the middle of the year 1519, Erasmus wrote from Lovain, an epistle to Luther, which proves with what Excessive caution of Erasmus. caution and temper that great man had beheld the progress of the contest. He takes care not to appear a partisan of Luther; he speaks of him with a studied ambiguity; commends him so far as he could consistently with his determined purpose not to expose himself to trouble or rebuke, and recommends to him moderation and mildness in his proceedings. In this last point, he certainly deserved the thanks of Luther. Let us remember, however, that timid and artful politicians were never employed, to any good purpose, in the service of Jesus Christ.

No man understood better than Erasmus the art of suggesting advice, in nice and difficult cases, without giving offence. The latter part of his letter to Luther He writes in a complimentary style to Luther. runs thus: "In England you have persons of the greatest distinction, who think highly of your writings. Here also you have advocates, and among them there is one most excellent character. For

* Luth. Op. Witt.

† Maimb. in Seck. p. 18.—Varillas, in eod. p. 22.—See also pp. 439, &c. of this Vol.

my part, I keep clear of all party, with a view to be of as much service as I can to the revival of literature. And I think one does more good by civility and moderation than by violence. In that way Christ has brought mankind under his government: In that way St. Paul abrogated the Jewish ritual. It is better to complain of those who abuse the authority of the pontiffs, than of the pontiffs themselves; and I would make the same remark respecting kings. We may argue as strongly as we can against notions that have long prevailed, but we should never contradict them positively. It is more effectual to treat acrimonious abuse with contempt than to confute it. On every occasion we should guard against arrogant and factious LANGUAGE; nothing can be more opposite to the spirit of Christianity. At the same time we should keep a strict watch over our MOTIVES. Anger, hatred, vain-glory, lay snares for us, even when we are most piously employed. I do not say these things to you by way of admonition, for you do observe the very rules here recommended. I mention them rather for the purpose of exhorting you to persevere in the same conduct always. Your commentaries on the Psalms please me exceedingly; and I hope they will do much good. The prior of the monastery at Antwerp says, he was formerly one of your scholars. He is a man of real primitive Christianity, and loves you most cordially. He is almost the only one who preaches Jesus Christ. The rest, in general, either aim at lucre, or treat the people with old wives' fables. May the Lord Jesus daily bestow upon you more plentifully HIS OWN SPIRIT, for the glory of his name and the public good! Farewell*."

There are many excellent observations interspersed throughout this composition. It is written in Latin, and is a good specimen of that elegant adroitness with which the accomplished author always conducted himself in affairs of peculiar delicacy.

But it was not only the wary Erasmus† and the timid Staupitius, who shrunk from the dangerous contest with the hierarchy in which Luther was involved; even Spalatinus himself was not a little inti-

Fears of
Spalatinus.

* Ep. Erasm. 427. Vol. I.

† Vid. Appendix, Erasmus.

midated by the daring measures of his adventurous friend. Several of the elector's court also were alarmed in a similar way. And thus the Saxon Reformer, whose righteous cause was eminently that of mankind in general, and who himself needed encouragement in his perils and anxieties, was called upon to rouse and animate the drooping minds of his best supporters, who began to waver and complain that matters were carried too far. This departure from a steady and consistent conduct in his more enlightened adherents was, no doubt, a trial peculiarly severe and vexatious to Luther. Men expect, from their enemies, reproach, misrepresentation, calumny; they are prepared for these things; they even triumph in them, and are stirred up by them to defence and victory; it is when their friends become tame or treacherous, when they deceive or desert them in critical moments, that the firmest mind, acting on principles merely human, is apt to give way. Conscious of integrity and disinterestedness, and overcome with chagrin and disappointment, a man, in such a case, abandons altogether a dangerous conflict, where his solitary efforts, against a host of adversaries, will prove inevitably abortive. Not so, however, where the cause is that of true religion, and where the Gospel of Christ has laid strong hold both of the understanding and the affections. We then look for the operation of other motives besides those of mere human nature. As we then serve a MASTER who MUST be obeyed, we have promises of help, directions for resignation, and grounds of comfort in the issue of ill success, such as belong to no worldly enterprises whatever.—The following extract of a letter to Spalatinus will illustrate these observations.

Luther to Spalatinus :—

“ Do not give way to fear too much, my dear Spalatinus; neither tease your mind by filling it with human imaginations. You know I must have perished long ago in my various struggles with the supporters of papal abominations, unless Christ had taken care of me and my concerns. Was there a single person, who did not expect that my ruin would have taken place before this time? I assure you, I suppress many things, which, if I were elsewhere, I should freely publish, concerning the enor-

mities of Rome. But you must never hope that I shall be free from persecution and danger, unless I were entirely to give up the cause of sound divinity. My friends, if they please, may suppose me beside myself; nevertheless I say, if this contest be really of God, it will not be ended, till TRUTH effectually save itself by its own right hand; not by mine, nor by yours. From the very first I have been expecting matters to come to the situation in which they are at this moment. However, I always told you, that I would quit the country, if my residence in Saxony was attended with any danger to the prince."

From this letter, which plainly implies a previous communication from Spalatinus, expressive of much apprehension and uneasiness, a judgment may be formed of the sentiments respecting Luther, which probably prevailed at the elector's court in the former part of the year 1519. Spalatinus resided with Frederic in the capacity both of secretary and domestic chaplain; and therefore would take no step of importance without the secret knowledge and approbation of that prince. Luther was perfectly aware of this; and in his letter to his friend, would, no doubt, consider the fears and anxieties which he was endeavouring to quiet, as in reality, the fears and anxieties of the elector himself. Hence he wisely repeats his readiness at all times to quit Saxony, if his presence there should be judged injurious to the interests of the prince.

On this occasion, however, neither the elector of Saxony nor his court should be accused of downright insincerity. In the main, they certainly favoured the principles of Luther, and rejoiced in his success; but they disliked any material share of the HAZARD of the controversy. Hence they became cold, supine, and irresolute; and hence, their communications, which ought to have furnished spirited counsel and encouragement, dwindled into prudential lessons of caution and remonstrance. Modern protestants should know the extreme disadvantages under which the great CHAMPION of Christian liberty laboured in the beginning of the reformation.

The immediate circumstance, which seems to have given the alarm at this time * to the friends of Luther, was the

* Viz. about the middle of 1519.

bold declarations of this theologian, in his answers to the positions of Eckius, respecting the foundation of the pope's authority. He had written to Spalatinus very explicitly on this subject, but seems not completely to have satisfied his scruples. To call in question the origin of the power of the pope, was to tread on tender ground; the nations, as yet, secretly revered his majesty, and dreaded his vengeance; though, in regard to ecclesiastical abuses in general, they had indeed begun to open their eyes, and were receiving fresh light apace.

The name of Eckius of Ingoldstadt has already been mentioned * among the adversaries of Luther. This able and learned doctor of divinity had formerly been the friend of our Reformer; but a thirst of fame and a prospect of worldly advantages seduced him from the cause of TRUTH. The facts we have to produce, indicate but too plainly the motives of Eckius. After his literary defeat in the affair of indulgences, he circulated thirteen propositions, all of them levelled against the heresies of Lutheranism. One of these propositions affirmed the grand article of a papist's faith, namely, "That the pontiffs are vicars of Christ, and the successors of St. Peter †." Luther had the sagacity instantly to see through his design, and expressed himself to the following effect: "I never so much as touched upon this subject in any of my discourses. Eckius now brings it forward to serve several purposes. He thinks, he shall hereby cast an odium upon me, and at the same time flatter the court of Rome to his own profit, and to the ruin of his brother Martin Luther."

It will here be proper to give a brief account of the famous disputation which was carried on publicly at Leipsic, for many days together, in the course of this year.

Eckius, relying on the brilliancy of his own talents and the popularity of his cause, earnestly sought for a public exhibition of theological skill; and, with this view, challenged Carolstadt, the colleague and adherent of Luther, and even Luther himself, to try their strength with him in a contest on the points in dispute. Carolstadt was a

Enmity of
Eckius.

The disputa-
tion at Leip-
sic, in 1519.

* Page 451 of this Vol.

† Propos. Ecc. Luth. Op. Vol. I.

doctor of divinity, and archdeacon of Wittemberg, and is esteemed one of the first open defenders of Luther. The challenge was accepted; and George, duke of Saxony, uncle of the elector, offered the combatants his city of Leipsic, as the scene of debate, with an engagement for their security, and a promise of every convenience. He was himself a strenuous Roman-catholic, and he expected that great glory would accrue to the papal cause from the well-known abilities and attainments of Eckius. Luther obtained leave to be present at the contest as a spectator, but was expressly denied the grant of a safe conduct, if he attempted to appear in the character of a disputant. The assembly was splendid, the expectations of mankind were strongly fixed; and it was vainly imagined that some decision would be made concerning the objects of contention.

The first subject of debate between Eckius and Carolstadt, respected the limits of nature and grace. The latter disputant defended the whole doctrine of Augustine concerning grace, which, Luther observes, Eckius did not oppose by argument, or with any real difference of sentiment, but only in mere words and in appearance. He granted that **FREE-WILL** without grace could effect nothing but sin. "It avails then," continues Luther, "not to good but evil. Where then is its liberty? Moreover, every illiterate person, who hears the expression **FREE-WILL**, naturally supposes that it implies man to be equally capable of good and evil; whence he will presume on his own strength, and think that he can convert himself to God. Eckius knows very well the impiety of this notion, yet he supports and spreads it. I too admit that man's will is free in a certain sense; not because it is now in the same state as it was in Paradise, but because it was made free originally, and may, through God's grace, become so again."

Eckius and
Carolstadt
dispute
publicly for
six days.

Such were the sentiments of Luther on this difficult subject; and, if due allowance be made for the impropriety of the term free-will, his ideas appear sufficiently in harmony with what the most evangelical persons, in all ages, have maintained. The whole controversy was carried

on with much clamour and confusion ; the Roman party prevailed in popularity at Leipsic ; Eckius delivered what he had to say with prodigious animation, and is allowed to have far exceeded Carolstadt in energetic exertions of voice and action. Luther protests, in the most solemn manner, that as long as an appeal to books and written documents were admitted, his friend Carolstadt defended himself with a rich variety of apt and excellent quotations. “ But,” says he, “ Eckius made a proposal, that all books should be laid aside, and the dispute go on without them ; the multitude gave a shout of approbation ; and then, I freely own, that Eckius, who had the better memory and a greater flow of words, supported his side of the question in a more plausible manner than his opponent*.”

This disputation continued for six days† ; during which time, the superior eloquence and acuteness of

Luther challenged by Eckius. Eckius seems to have afforded a temporary triumph to the enemies of the reformation.

Flushed with success, and thirsting for glory, this champion of the papal system, came to Luther at his lodgings, and, with an air of confidence, said, “ I understand you will not dispute with me in public.” “ How can I dispute with you,” said Luther, “ when the duke George refuses me my request of a safe conduct ?” Eckius replied, “ If I am not to combat you, I will spend no more time on Carolstadt. It was on YOUR account that I came here. Suppose I could obtain the public faith for your safety, would you then meet me and try your strength‡ ?” Luther consented ; and very soon after he had the duke’s leave to take Carolstadt’s place in the public debate.

This second theological conflict was carried on for ten days, with uncommon ardour and without intermission.

Again they dispute for the space of ten days. Among the articles of controversy were the doctrines of purgatory and indulgences, the nature of repentance and remission of sins, and, particularly, the foundation of the supremacy of the Roman pontiffs. It was in this last article of the controversy, that Eckius placed his chief strength and ex-

* Seck. 73.

† From June 27, 1519, to July 4.

‡ Melch. Ad.

pectation of victory. His numerous audience in general, with the duke of Saxony at their head, favoured the papal cause: Long habits of ignorance, superstition, and prejudice, in religious matters, had established the Romish doctrines; and the few, who ventured to inquire for reasons of their faith, were deemed impious and accursed, and worthy of expulsion from the community.

Moreover, this question concerning the superiority of the Roman See was well contrived to promote the ambitious designs of Eckius in every way. Luther, it was foreseen, must either shun the main point in debate by disgraceful evasions; or, by a direct avowal of his doctrines, expose himself to the charge of open heresy. He must either yield the palm of eloquence and of theological skill to his crafty adversary, or he would inevitably furnish such decisive proofs of rebellion against the hierarchy as would ensure his own condemnation at the court of Rome. Thus the troublesome innovator was supposed to be entangled in an inextricable dilemma; while the prudent defender of the established religion, looking forward to nothing but conquest and glory, anticipated the praises and honours of the Roman pontiff. Luther, whom we have observed to have been fully sensible in how nice and critical a situation he was placed*, was much hurt by the ungenerous conduct of Eckius in this business, and severely reproached him for it afterwards.

To the talents and the artifices of the popish advocate, the Saxon Reformer, besides his superior abilities and more intimate knowledge of the Scriptures, opposed a good conscience, a firm determination to hazard every thing in the cause of TRUTH, and a confident expectation of the blessing of the Almighty. In particular, against Eckius's doctrine of the divine right of the popes, he advanced the following proposition: "All the proofs, which can be produced to show that the church of Rome is superior to other churches, are taken out of insipid decretals of the popes themselves, made within these four hundred years; and against this notion of supremacy, there are passages of the Holy Scriptures, approved histories for eleven hundred years, and the determinations of the council of Nice."

* Page 492—493 of this Vol.

When Eckius contended, that the expressions, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church," "And I will give unto thee the keys," evinced the supremacy of St. Peter and his successors; that this was the explanation given by the holy fathers, and that the contrary opinion was among the errors of Wickliff and John Huss; Luther in reply said, that he could produce more passages from the fathers in support of his own interpretation of the passages in question than Eckius could of his; but that he had no hesitation to add, that even if all the fathers, without exception, had understood the passages in that sense, he would confute them by the authority of St. Paul, and St. Peter himself, who say, that Jesus Christ is the only foundation and corner-stone of his church. He further observed, that the words, "Thou art Peter," if construed strictly, must be confined to the person of Peter, and therefore the authority conveyed by them ceased when that Apostle died; and that if their meaning was to be extended to the church and to Peter's successors, no reason could be given, why ALL the Apostles and ALL their successors should not be understood to be the successors of Peter. Lastly, he intimated that his adversary had been very unfortunate in appealing to the authority of Cyprian. "If," said Luther, "the learned doctor will agree to stand or fall by the authority of Cyprian, we shall quickly put an end to this controversy: For, in the first place, Cyprian never addresses Cornelius, the bishop of Rome, in any other manner than 'My dear brother;' and in the second, he expressly says, that every bishop has a distinct jurisdiction of his own, and that bishops ought not to interfere with each other, but wait for the day of judgment by our Lord Jesus Christ*."

Eckius was so much struck with the reasonings of Luther, and especially with the neat and well digested order in which his materials were arranged, that he was compelled to acknowledge, before a splendid audience, the "qualifications and attainments of his Reverend opponent." He even besought their illustrious and magnificent Mightinesses to pardon himself, who was so much occupied with other concerns, if he should not be able to produce such a mass of accurate testimonies as the learned

* *Revolut. Lutheri.*

doctor had laid before them. He came to Leipsic, he said, not to write books, but to dispute.

It will be unnecessary to trouble the protestant reader with a minute detail of a multitude of arguments, which were brought forward in this debate, with great warmth, eloquence, and dexterity, on both sides. We shall make a few concise observations on several of the controverted points, and also take notice of some instructive facts and circumstances which are connected with this famous disputation at Leipsic, and then dismiss the subject.

Though Luther judged it impious to maintain the DIVINE RIGHT of the pope in that strict sense, which makes him the successor of St. Peter and vicar of Christ, his extreme reverence for the Scriptures, and his tenderness of conscience, disposed him, as yet, to allow the superiority of the Roman See, but on different grounds. It could not be denied that the pontiffs had possessed a decided pre-eminence from age to age, and therefore, he conceived, it was his duty not to resist "the powers that be." This scriptural argument, which for a long time appeared to his mind in itself unanswerable, was still further strengthened by two powerful reasons. Firstly, The will of God, he thought, might be clearly collected from the facts, independent of Scripture. Unless it had been the will of God, the popes could never have attained so great and durable a dominion. Secondly, "The whole body of Christians," he said, "own themselves to be under the Roman pontiff: This universal consent is a consideration of the greatest weight: the unity of the church should be preserved in every thing that is not directly contrary to the word of God *."

Luther's
sentiments
on the su-
premacy of
the pope.

Entirely agreeable to these sentiments is the declaration of Luther in one of his letters to Spalatinus, who, it should seem, had been directed by the elector of Saxony to admonish him most seriously, in all things to observe a reverential obedience towards the pope. "To separate myself," says he, "from the Apostolical See of Rome is a thing that has never yet entered my mind †." However, his next letter to the same friend intimates a further insight into the essence of popery. "That I may be the

* Revolut. Lutheri.

† Ep. p. 99.

better qualified," says he, "for the ensuing debate at Leipsic, I am turning over the decretals of the popes; and I would whisper into your ear, that I begin to entertain doubts, whether the Roman pontiff be not the very Antichrist of the Scriptures, or his Messenger; so wretchedly corrupted by him, in the decretals, are the pure doctrines of Christ*." As long as this new sentiment remained crude and unsettled in the mind of Luther, it certainly behoved him not to act upon it; but it is not difficult to understand how the divulging of so important a secret to Spalatinus must have startled the elector Frederic and his court, who, we have seen, were sufficiently alarmed with the liberties which had already been taken with the pontifical authority†.

How different were the views and motives of the persons who took part in the affairs of religion, about the time of the public controversy at Leipsic, and some months before! Leo X. was indolent and ill advised; perfectly indifferent in regard to religion and piety; only anxious to advance the opulence, grandeur and dominion of the Roman See. His ostentatious champion Eckius, on the one hand, flattered and misled his lordly master, who pretended to be infallible; and, on the other, menaced and calumniated the Augustine monk, while in reality he was seeking only his own aggrandisement. Frederic the wise, and some of his court, grieved for several of the reigning abuses, which were obvious and undeniable, but still remained in a wretched bondage, confirmed by long habits of superstitious submission. Though friendly to improvements in religion, they dreaded the rude hand of the Saxon Reformer, and were in general too much disposed to bow to the majesty of the pope. Lastly, Luther was daily approaching, by firm but gradual advances, to that evangelical liberty, of which he became, under God, the principal reviver in Europe. Let these facts and observations be kept in mind, and they will help us to discover, what must have been the feelings of our Reformer at Leipsic, while he was disputing with Eckius concerning the pope's supremacy. To have denied

* Ep. p. 100.

† See p. 491 of this Vol.

the DIVINE RIGHT of the pontifical jurisdiction, according to the fullest and most extended interpretation of the words, was sufficiently dangerous; but to have dropped the slightest insinuation that the bishop of Rome was actually the Antichrist of the New Testament, or, that the Roman church was antichristian in principle, would probably have cost him his life.

The more thoroughly we examine the principles of Luther, the more exactly consistent do we find them with his practice, even in the most difficult circumstances. So in the present instance: He seriously believed, that long possession and the consent of the faithful*, were solid arguments for the papal supremacy; but some rays of fresh light burst in upon the mind of the honest inquirer at the very time when he was arming for the combat at Leipsic. He was then in no condition either to confirm or to do away his new suspicions of the antichristian character of the popedom. What was to be done? He determined to dismiss those suspicions for the present, till he should have leisure to weigh them; and in the mean time he adhered to the only principle, by which in his judgment, the duty of obedience to the existing hierarchy could be supported. He dared openly to assert†, that it was far better the Roman pontiffs should, with fear and trembling, see the foundation of their authority in the permission of God and the consent of their subjects, than that, under a notion of DIVINE RIGHT, they should feel themselves secure, depend upon force and terror, and by degrees exercise an odious tyranny.

This declaration, though it fell greatly short of the creed of a true Roman-catholic, yet, by containing an actual acknowledgment of the pope's supremacy, manifested a spirit of obedience and reconciliation on the part of the Reformer. Nor was it possible for him, without doing the utmost violence to his conscience, to have exhibited a nearer consent to the doctrines of Eckius. There is even some reason to believe, that if his friends, namely, the elector of Saxony and his court, had not discovered so excessive an anxiety lest he should offend the pope

* Luth. Op. Resol.

† Resolut. de pot. Papæ.

by disrespectful treatment, he would have conceded less at this time to his opponent, respecting the grand article of Roman-catholic doctrine; or, at least, would have acted with more reserve on a point where his own faith, though modified and less offensive, was certainly beginning to waver. Before the public disputation at Leipsic, Luther printed and circulated his sentiments on the pope's supremacy, the same in substance as is related in the preceding pages. He took that step, he tells us, because he had great doubts, whether he should be allowed to enter the lists with Eckius as a public disputant. Three times by letters, he says, he put the question to the duke George, but could obtain no answer*. All this is, no doubt, strictly true. Yet WHENCE, it is asked, arose the solicitude of Luther to appear, at all and on any principles, as the public defender of pontifical authority; the public defender of an unscriptural opinion, which he was soon going to abandon with abhorrence and detestation; and which, in his private letters, he was already beginning to reprobate in very significant language?

Seckendorf ascribes these conciliatory measures entirely to the fears and remonstrances of the elector Frederic and his court; and thinks that Luther in this instance acted contrary both to his own judgment and his inclination†. To differ from this very judicious and candid memorialist can never be pleasant, and will, in general, be found unsafe: Nevertheless, I cannot but think that, in estimating the motives of the Saxon Reformer, his friends as well as his adversaries have, on this and several other occasions, too much overlooked his profound veneration for established authorities. They seem to have scarcely supposed it possible, that a man, who was so deeply concerned in the confusions and divisions of the church, should still have been a friend to peace and good order. Whereas in fact, Luther's spirit of submission to legal establishments is as exemplary and unquestionable, as his courage and resolution in defending Christian liberty is truly wonderful and unparalleled. A proper attention to this part of his character will lead the candid inquirer to satisfactory explanations of his

* Lib. I. Ep.

† Page 71. Seck.

conduct in some cases where he has been too hastily accused of inconsistency*.

Luther's own description of his feelings respecting the matters in dispute between Eckius and himself ought not to be omitted here; as it will, doubtless, be preferred to any conjectures either of Roman-catholics or of Protestants, especially by those, Candid concessions of Luther. who have observed the integrity and the precision with which this faithful servant of God always lays open his mind on serious occasions. My own case, says he, is a notable example of the difficulty with which a man emerges from erroneous notions of long standing. How true is the proverb, Custom is a second nature! How true is that saying of Augustine, Habit, if not resisted, becomes necessity! I, who, both publicly and privately, had taught divinity with the greatest diligence for seven years, insomuch that I retained in my memory almost every word of my lectures, was in fact at that time only just initiated into the knowledge and faith of Christ; I had only just learnt that a man must be justified and saved, not by works, but by the faith of Christ: and lastly, in regard to pontifical authority, though I publicly maintained that the pope was not the head of the church by a DIVINE RIGHT, yet I stumbled at the very next step, namely, that the whole papal system was a Satanic invention. This I did not see, but contended obstinately for the pope's RIGHT, FOUNDED ON HUMAN REASONS; so thoroughly deluded was I, by the example of others, by the title of HOLY CHURCH, and by my own habits. Hence I have learnt to have more candour for bigoted papists, especially if they are not much acquainted with sacred or perhaps even with profane history †.

The victory in the theological contest at Leipsic, as might have been expected, was claimed by both sides. But, instead of repeating many contradic- Consequences of the Leipsic disputations. tory and positive assertions, that have ori-

* The reader will not suppose me to insinuate, that Luther's respect for the elector of Saxony and his court had NO WEIGHT in determining him to treat the papal authority in a reverential manner during his controversy with Eckius; on the contrary, I believe it had CONSIDERABLE WEIGHT. But why is the consideration of other motives to be omitted; and particularly of such motives as are known to have been congenial with the man?

† Luth. Op. Vol. I. Præf.

minated in prejudice and party zeal, it will be better to mention several undeniable facts, which may assist the judgment in discovering what were the real sentiments of mankind at the time of this transaction, so celebrated in ecclesiastical history.

1. George, the duke of Saxony, who on all occasions was warmly attached to the papal interests, invited the disputants, after the debate was finished, to a convivial entertainment, and treated them with the greatest liberality and condescension. During dinner he laid his hands on the shoulders of Luther and Eckius, and, gently stroking them, said, "Whether the pope exists by DIVINE or by HUMAN RIGHT, HE IS, however, THE POPE." "This prince," said Luther, "would never have made this observation, if he had not felt the force of my arguments*."

2. Luther complains bitterly of the uncivil treatment which he met with in general from the inhabitants and the university of Leipsic; and, he observes, on the contrary, what kindness and honours they heaped upon his adversary Eckius. Yet, notwithstanding both their aversion to the Reformer, and their attachment to the pope-dom, Hoffman, who was at that time rector of the university, and who had been appointed judge of the arguments alleged on both sides, refused to declare to whom the victory belonged; so that the decision was left to the universities of Erfurt and Paris†. The former of these, in spite of the importunate solicitations of George the duke of Saxony, remained perfectly silent; the latter, also, gave no judgment concerning the controversy at Leipsic, though, some time afterwards‡, contrary to the favourable hopes which Luther had conceived of that learned body, they censured, as heretical, several of his positions or theses, collected from his various writings.

3. The Romish advocate Maimbourg allows, "that both the disputants displayed much ingenuity and erudition during their combat in the castle of Leipsic, but with this difference; that THE TRUTH, defended by a man of sound principles, like Eckius, vanquished error, though supported with all the knowledge and subtilty of a fine

* Luth. Op. Vol. I.—Melch. Adam.—Seck. p. 74.

† Mosheim, Vol. II.

‡ Not till the year 1521.

genius." This testimony of an inimical historian, proves the celebrity of the talents of Luther. But the FACT of which I would here particularly take notice, is, the undeniable consequence which the exertion of those talents, in vehement and subtle disputation for ten days together, produced on the mind of Eckius. His bitterness and enmity against his opponent is well known to have suddenly increased, from this period, beyond all bounds. The sequel of our narrative will show with how much personal malice and resentment he sought the destruction of the Saxon Reformer, and also how mischievous his rash counsels proved to the interests of the Roman See. The reader will then judge for himself, whether the furious conduct of the papal champion is best explained, on the supposition of his consciousness of superiority and of victory in the affairs at Leipsic, or a revengeful sense of the humiliation and defeat which he suffered in that memorable contest*.

It was in an accurate acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, and with ecclesiastical history, that Luther more particularly manifested his superiority over Eckius. Very full and exact documents are in existence, both of what was said and what was written in the disputation; and no well-informed Roman-catholic will deny this to be a fair statement of the case. But, notwithstanding the increased reputation with which the German theologian departed from the scene of controversy, it was easy to foresee, that the court of Rome would now be more incensed against him than ever. He had indeed almost agreed with his adversary on some of the disputed points; he had even defended the authority of the Roman See, by placing it on the best foundation in his power; in short, he had exhibited a spirit of fidelity, moderation and obedience; but all this could not expiate the unpardonable offence of searching the sacred oracles for himself, of confuting the papal pretensions to Divine appointment and infallibility, and, what was deemed, perhaps, if not the most heinous, the most dangerous crime of all, of resisting and exposing the flagitious practices of the inferior agents and instruments of ecclesiastical rapine and tyranny. The

* Mosheim, Vol. II. Chap. ii. sect. x. and Mr. Maclaine's note.

man, who had proceeded to such extremities, was not to be managed by mild and gentle admonitions; neither was he to be gained over by bribes and flattery; he was an enemy of the holy church, and justly merited all she could inflict in her utmost fury and indignation.

Moreover, popery was not a religion which betrayed only occasional defects and errors: It had long been a SYSTEM of corruption; all the parts of which were thoroughly connected with each other, and conspired together, to deceive, defraud, and domineer over mankind. The members of the system sympathized with their head in a remarkable manner: they saw their very existence in its safety; and flew to its defence on the slightest appearance of danger. In return, the sovereign head of this vast body superintended the respective interests of all the members with exquisite care, and even with paternal solicitude. If, in some instances, the conduct of the Roman pontiffs does not exactly accord with this representation, the deviation will be found to have arisen, never from a relaxation or a change of principle, but from pride, contempt, indolence, and a sense of security. This was the case, we have seen, with Leo X. in the very early stages of Lutheranism.

Striking examples of this reciprocal sort of sensibility and mutual protection were furnished, in the latter part of this year, 1519, by the two universities of Louvain and Cologne, and the cardinal de Tortosa. There can be no doubt but that this dignified ecclesiastic, who himself afterwards succeeded Leo X. in the pontificate, acted, in all he did, by the direction of the court of Rome. Accordingly we find one of his letters, addressed to the principal academies of Louvain, full of hard terms against Luther and his writings, at the same time containing stimulative exhortations and admonitions, that they should give a public testimony of their disapprobation of such mischievous heresies. The divines of Louvain appear to have been of themselves sufficiently disposed to this measure, and even to have consulted the cardinal respecting its propriety. He commended their faithful zeal; and the result of this mutual communication was a public decree of the rulers

The zeal of
the papal
party.

of the university, in which they condemn many of Luther's propositions and doctrines, and pronounce them false, scandalous, and heretical. These warm advocates for the established faith did not stop here. They sent one of Martin Luther's books to the divines of Cologne, and requested them to censure its heretical contents in a public manner. These presently pronounced it full of errors and heresies, directed it to be suppressed; and declared, that it ought to be burnt, and the author of it obliged to make a public recantation*. THUS, by management of this sort, the friends of the papacy, very soon after their defeat and disgrace at Leipsic, obtained the sanction of two universities in favour of the reigning corruptions; while those learned seminaries, on their part, failed not to secure to themselves the approbation and applause of the Roman See.

It would be an useless employment to detail the particulars of what passed at the conferences at Leipsic, respecting several Romish doctrines, which in our times give not the smallest concern to any intelligent protestant.

On the superstitious notion of PURGATORY, many arguments and distinctions were produced on both sides. In general, Luther admitted his firm belief of the existence of such a place, and even that some ^{Purgatory.} obscure hints of it were to be found in Scripture. But he denied that any thing clear and convincing was revealed in any part of the Sacred writings, concerning this doctrine†. As the researches of this great man grew deeper, he gradually doubted of several points, which he then held sacred; and, in process of time, he dismissed them from his creed entirely. The Roman-catholic sentiment, of the number of the sacraments, and of the communion under ONE KIND, might be mentioned here.

It was not by accident that Eckius brought forward several propositions concerning the nature of INDULGENCES. This was the grand question which ^{Indulgences.} had produced all the present dissensions in the church. It was closely connected with every inquiry that related to pontifical authority: it was, IN PRACTICE, the exercise of a very material part of that power, which, in THEORY, was pretended to originate in a divine right.

* Vol. II. Luth. Op. Witt.

† Disput. Leips.

To entangle, therefore, or crush the Reformer on this point, in a public debate and before a splendid audience, would furnish such a proof of zeal for the faith, of ability to defend it, and of obedience to the hierarchy, as would infallibly ensure every reward, which ambition could wish for, or which gratitude could bestow.

Luther extricated himself from the difficulty in which his artful adversary had placed him, with a success which, before the conflict, he had not ventured to expect. Eckius happened to affirm, that a sort of medium of opinion ought to be held with respect to indulgences: "On the one hand, they ought not to be condemned, and, on the other, they should not be entirely **RELIED ON**." To the same effect he taught the people in the most public manner. In fact, he seems not to have foreseen, how great an advantage he gave his adversary by this unwary concession. "I had supposed," says Luther, "that this affair of the indulgences would be by far the most difficult point that I should have to manage, and that our disputation would have turned chiefly upon it; whereas it created little or no trouble. I found I could nearly agree to Eckius's explanation. Never on any occasion did papal indulgences receive a more wretched and unfortunate support. They were treated in a way that almost produced laughter. If the proclaimers of the indulgences had held the same doctrine at the time of vending them, the **NAME OF LUTHER** would probably have remained unknown. I say, if the people had been informed that the diplomas of indulgence were not to be **RELIED ON**, these imaginary pardons would have lost all their reputation, and the commissioners, who conducted the sale of them, would have died of hunger."—The acuteness of Luther, as a theological disputant, ready to avail himself of the smallest indiscretion of his adversary, appears very manifest from this instance.

His heart, however, was not in these noisy and contentious scenes. Instruction of youth in divinity, and preaching of the Gospel of Christ, he considered as his proper business. He used to lament the peculiar infelicity of the age, by which he was obliged to waste in controversy so many

The serious
views and
motives of
Luther.

hours, that might have been far better employed in guiding souls into the way of salvation. "How long," cried he, "am I to spend my time and strength in frivolous discussions about indulgences and pontifical authority,—subjects, which have not the remotest tendency to benefit the church, or promote practical godliness*."

That some good might result from the contentions at Leipsic, and that mankind might be less bewildered in the mazes of subtle disputation, this diligent servant of God determined to review carefully all his own positions, which had been the subject of debate in his conference with Eckius, and to publish them with concise explanations, and with arguments in their support, consisting of appeals to Scripture and ecclesiastical history. These positions, or, as they were sometimes called, theses or conclusions, amounted in number to thirteen, and related chiefly to Roman-catholic peculiarities. Several of them, however, gave the author occasion to state and studiously illustrate the scriptural doctrine of GRACE, and the nature of in-dwelling† sin, as described by St. Paul in the seventh chapter to the Romans. In fallen man, he observes, there remains an internal principle of evil, even after he is renewed by the grace of God. Every Christian needs daily repentance, because he sins daily, not indeed by daily perpetrating flagrant crimes, but by falling short of perfect obedience. Hence there is not a just man upon earth, because even in actions that are good in themselves, there is precisely so much sin as there is repugnance, or difficulty, or want of cheerfulness in the will. He owns, that divines were accustomed to evade the positive testimony of such passages of Scripture, as, 'There is not a just man upon earth, who doeth good and sinneth not;' but, says he, let us listen to St. Paul: 'The good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.' And again: 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind. Let human reasoning and human authority, whether of the church

* Luther's Letter to Emser.

† This word, though not a very common one, has been thought, by excellent divines, to express St. Paul's meaning in Romans vii. verse 20. better than any other "Sin that dwelleth in me."

or of councils, give place and submit : If an angel from heaven should teach the contrary, I would not believe him.'

If, continues Luther, the evil principle, called the flesh, prevented the operation of the good principle, called the spirit, in a man so holy and full of grace as the apostle Paul, how can our theologians maintain that there is no sin in good works ? 'It is not,' say they, 'sin ; it is defect, it is infirmity.'—This is an unscriptural and a dangerous way of speaking. In fact, every Christian feels a continual conflict between the flesh and the spirit as long as he lives ; and therefore in the very best actions there is, in this world, a mixture of the effects of the flesh : but it is not so in heaven. Wherefore, what knowledge other persons may have derived from the scholastic divinity of the times, it is for them to consider : In regard to myself, I am sure I learnt from it nothing of the real nature of sin, of righteousness, of baptism, or of the whole Christian life ; nor any thing of the excellency of God or his works, his grace, his justice. Faith, hope, charity, were to me words without meaning. In short, I not only learnt nothing right ; but I had to UNLEARN every thing which I had acquired in that way. I shall be much surprised if others have succeeded better ; but should there be any such, I sincerely congratulate them. In the schools I lost Jesus Christ ; I have now found him in St. Paul.

“Search the Scriptures” is the precept, which of all others seems to have most deeply impressed the anxious, inquisitive mind of Luther. And further, in his inquiries, he never forgot that he himself was personally interested in the great truths of revealed religion. He studied the Bible, not through curiosity, or the love of fame, but from a sense of the importance of its contents, and of his own dangerous situation. How little have those understood the real character of this Reformer, who have looked on him as a turbulent, ambitious innovator, impelled by selfish and worldly motives ! Nothing can be more affecting than the following account, which he himself gives of his own internal troubles. “However blameless a life I might lead as a monk, I experienced a most unquiet conscience ;

His honest
account of
his own
religious ex-
perience.

I perceived myself a sinner before God ; I saw that I could do nothing to appease him, and I hated the idea of a just God that punishes sinners. I was well versed in all St. Paul's writings ; and, in particular, I had a most wonderful desire to understand the epistle to the Romans. But I was puzzled with the expression, ' THERE-IN is the righteousness of God revealed.' My heart rose almost against God with a silent sort of blasphemy : At least in secret I said with great murmur and indignation, Was it not enough that wretched man, already eternally ruined by the curse of original depravity, should be oppressed with every species of misery through the condemning power of the commandment, but that, even through the GOSPEL, God should threaten us with his anger and justice, and thereby add affliction to affliction ? Thus I raged with a troubled conscience. Over and over I turned the above-mentioned passage to the Romans most importunately. My thirst to know the apostle's meaning was insatiable."

" At length, while I was meditating day and night on the words, and their connexion with what immediately follows, namely, ' the just shall live by faith,' it pleased God to have pity upon me, to open mine eyes, and to show me, that the righteousness of God, which is here said in the Gospel to be REVEALED from faith to faith, relates to the method by which God, in his mercy, justifies a sinner through faith, agreeably to what is written, ' the just shall live by faith.' Hence I felt myself a new man, and all the Scriptures appeared to have a new face. I ran quickly through them as my memory enabled me ; I collected together the leading terms ; and I observed, in their meaning, a strict analogy, according to my new views. Thus, in many instances, the WORK of God, means that which he works in us ; and the power, and wisdom of God, mean the power and wisdom, which his Spirit operates in the minds of the faithful ; and in the same manner are to be understood the PATIENCE, the SALVATION, the GLORY, of God.

" The expression, ' RIGHTEOUSNESS of God,' now became as sweet to my mind as it had been hateful before ;

and this very passage of St. Paul proved to me the entrance into paradise *."

This interesting account of the steps by which Luther was led to evangelical light in the important doctrine of justification by faith, evidently refers to what passed in his mind about the time of the celebrated disputation at Leipsic ; and for that reason may seem not improperly introduced in this place. One of his conclusions in that contest led to a discussion on faith, repentance, and free-will ; and we find, in his defence of that conclusion, a similar mode of argumentation. He even produces the very same passage of St. Paul, from the first chapter to the Romans ; and blames divines of the stamp of Eckius, for adding to the words, 'the just shall live by faith,' other words, namely, 'but not by faith ONLY,' as necessary to prevent mistakes. He quotes also the tenth chapter of the same epistle, 'with the heart man believeth unto righteousness,' and takes notice that, likewise in this verse, righteousness is attributed to faith only. "The works of faith," continues he, "don't produce the faith, but the faith produces the works. The meaning of the apostle is not, that justified persons neglect good works, but that justification is prior to good works ; and that good works can be performed by justified persons only."

Eckius had maintained, that some of the actions of good men, and particularly their last actions in dying, were perfectly free from sin. Luther had too high ideas of the holiness of the divine law, and too deep a sense of the evil of sin, and of the depravity of human nature, to admit this position. Accordingly he opposed it with all his might, and used strong language in support of the contrary sentiment. "There has not," said he, "for these thousand years, been started a more mischievous, pestilential notion, than that God does not demand a perfect fulfilling of all his laws. This is directly to contradict Jesus Christ. God never alters his perfect law ; though he pardons us when we break it. Observe, however, he does not pardon those who are asleep, but those who labour, those who fear, and who say with Job, 'I know thou wilt not hold me innocent.' Never sup-

* Luth. Op. Præf. Vol. I.

pose that God does not require an exact regard to every tittle of his law ; such a notion will soon engender pride, and make you despise that grace, through which his holy law, as a schoolmaster, should compel you to seek deliverance."

One of Eckius's propositions, concerning the natural powers of the human mind since the fall of our first parents, seemed strongly tinged with Pelagian sentiments ; and these were diametrically opposite to Luther's views of the Gospel. In this matter, therefore, he did not confine himself merely to the defence of his own conclusions, but exposed the doctrines of Eckius with force and animation, terming them impious and heretical in the highest degree, and inconsistent with the apostle Paul, and the whole Gospel of Christ. Again, he pressed the grand doctrine of Christianity, that we are justified, before God, by faith only ; he showed, that this article of belief was the test of orthodoxy or heresy, according as it was held soundly or corruptly ; that all other points were subordinate and centered in this ; and that every objection to it, which could possibly be devised, was done away by this single consideration, namely, that a right faith, was necessarily productive of good works. " St. Paul," says he, " speaks of a living, not a dead, faith ; for a dead faith is merely a speculative opinion. But observe how theologians, building on a solitary passage of St. James, in his second chapter, have dared to oppose the whole current of Scripture. Mankind are exceedingly prone to place confidence in their own works : hence, the great danger of pharisaical doctrine. On the contrary, if you do but take care to instruct the people properly concerning the nature of pure Christian faith, they will then understand the power of such a faith to produce good works ; they will see that good works can be produced in no other way ; and lastly, that these works are, in fact, the spontaneous and infallible consequence of a right faith."

Pelagian
sentiments
of Eckius.

The contemplation of the ways of Providence, at all times a rational employment, is never more instructive than when we can trace the gradual progress of divine light, as it breaks in upon the mind of honest, industrious

inquirers after religious truth. Let not therefore the modern critic, whose ideas of the justification of a sinner may, PERHAPS, be more exact and digested than those of Luther were at the time of his controversy with Eckius, hastily condemn, or treat with disrespect, the sentiments and explanations which have been laid before him on this essential point. Let him, rather first, advert to the prevailing ignorance and errors of the clergy in the days of the Reformer; and then, with pleasure and surprise, he will observe the immense strides, towards a complete system of Christian principles, which were taken by an Augustine monk during the year 1519, in the midst of his persecutions: and moreover, on a strict examination, he may be astonished to find how perfectly evangelical also at that time Luther was, in the particular article of justification by faith, as to the substance and general view of this important doctrine. Afterwards he defended and explained it with probably as much accuracy and precision, as most succeeding divines have done, though the question has now been agitated and debated for several centuries.

The rigorous laws of history oblige us not to omit, that Luther, in the same treatise, which contains the defence of his own conclusions against Eckius, hastily expressed a doubt of the divine authority of the epistle of St. James*. Want of a just insight into the views of the inspired writer may account for this temerity, but will not excuse it; however, he seems not to have insisted on his scruples, much less to have persevered in them. In regard to his misapprehension of the meaning of this part of Holy Writ, we may the less wonder, when we reflect, that even the very best modern interpreters of the Bible do not agree in their explanation of the second chapter of St. James. Luther conceived that chapter to militate against the doctrine of justification by faith. Truth is seldom seen at once in its full order and proportion of parts. But who can doubt that the Saxon Reformer was under a divine influence, which daily taught him his natural sinfulness? All men, who know themselves as he did, can never find rest to their consciences

Luther doubts
the authority
of the Epistle
of St. James.

* Resol. Lips. disp.

but in Christ alone. Necessity, experience, and the word of God, unite in convincing them, that no other way of peace can be found for sinners but through the Redeemer; and, also, that this is the only way by which they can heartily serve God, love their neighbours, and, in general, be fruitful in good works. But more of this important subject hereafter.

In his literary contest with Eckius, Luther apologizes for the inelegance of his style. He confesses that it was negligent and slovenly, and that he had taken no pains to make it accurate, because he had no expectation of immortal fame, nor a desire for it. I am drawn, says he, by force into this contest. I mean, as soon as I can consistently with my conscience, to retire into a corner. Some other persons shall appear on the stage, God willing. Such was the real modesty of Luther; and so little did he apprehend, that the less he sought for glory, the more he should attain it.

In fact, the publications of Luther were circulated throughout Germany, and were read with the greatest avidity by all ranks and orders. Eckius and other advocates of the Roman-catholic cause, answered the heretic with great heat and indignation. Luther replied with the promptitude and precision, and also with the zeal and confidence, of a man who was perfectly master of the arguments on both sides of the questions in dispute, felt deeply interested in the establishment of truth, and had thoroughly examined the foundations of his opposition to the prevailing corruptions. By these means the discussions at Leipsic were detailed with minuteness, and continued with spirit; they every where became topics of common conversation; and, as Luther constantly appealed to plain sense, and the written word of God, the scholastic subtilties of Eckius lost their weight and reputation among the people. It is not difficult to see, that the advantages, which, in this way, the cause of the Reformation derived from the public contest at Leipsic, and its consequences, must have been very considerable.

The Reformation derived advantages from this dispute.

Particular and important instances might be mentioned. The elector of Saxony was the only prince who pub-

licly favoured the Reformation; and there is good reason to believe, that both his knowledge of the Scriptures and his kindness towards Luther were much increased by what he read and heard from others, relative to the controversy in 1519. It appears from very authentic memoirs by Spalatinus, that the mind of Frederic had been much exercised about divine things, even before his Wittemberg theologian had dared to expose and withstand the corrupt practices of the Roman See. With much diligence and constant prayer he had read the word of God; and was extremely displeased with the usual modes of interpreting it. And when, through the grace of God and the instrumentality of Luther, some rays of evangelical light began to break forth, he opened himself explicitly to his chaplain, Spalatinus, to this effect: "I have always indulged a secret hope, that in a short time we should be blessed with a purer knowledge of what we ought to believe." Meanwhile he gave attention to practical sermons, and read the Scriptures with the greatest delight, especially the four Gospels, from which he collected many excellent passages, and so impressed them on his memory, that whenever occasion required, he could readily apply them with great advantage and comfort. He used particularly to insist on that saying of our Lord in the fifteenth chapter of St. John, "Without me ye can do nothing." "He would dwell on this passage," says Spalatinus, "more than any other. He considered it as decisive against the vulgar notion of free-will; and on this very ground he argued against it, long before Erasmus had dared to publish his miserable, unscriptural performance on the natural liberty of the human mind." "How can it possibly be," said the prince, "that mankind should be perfectly free from all corrupt bias, when Christ himself says, Without me ye can do nothing?"

Such were the reflections, which the disputation at Leipsic, concerning the necessity of GRACE, and the natural condition of man, since the fall of Adam, appear to have produced in the pious mind of Frederic the WISE. While they imply considerable insight into several of the essential doctrines of Christianity, they also throw much light on the religious character of this prince. Frederic

had a deep sense of his own weakness and sinfulness ; a never-failing preparative this, for the hearty reception of the glad tidings of the Gospel ! He felt much anxiety that the faith of Christ might be preached among the people in its purity ; and this anxiety kept pace with his own progress in practical religion. Another excellent symptom of a divine teaching, and of truly spiritual affections. Still this excellent personage remained in bondage to papal authority, and papal superstitions ; and hence, though his views of the Bible were in perfect harmony with those of Luther, and though he further agreed with the Reformer, that shameful abuses ought to be corrected, dangerous errors exposed, salutary truths propagated, and mankind put into possession of the words of eternal life, he nevertheless continued to feel most disquieting apprehensions, lest, in compassing these important purposes, OFFENCE should be given to the majesty of the Roman pontiffs.

It may deserve notice, that soon after the conferences at Leipsic, the elector of Saxony had a severe illness ; and that the industrious Luther, notwithstanding the multiplicity of his necessary employments, found time to compose a small tract, for the express purpose of comforting this good prince in his afflictions. The wisdom, the sincerity, and the Christian affection, which the author exhibited in this little treatise, would, no doubt, have a tendency to increase the estimation in which he was already held by Frederic*.

The celebrated Philip Melancthon, who is always numbered among the most illustrious and respectable instruments of the Reformation, was actually present at the public disputations with Eckius. Some say, that he placed himself near Carolstadt, and

Melancthon's account of the disputation at Leipsic.

* The opinion, which Erasmus entertained of this little tract, is expressed in a letter, written several years after, to the bishop of Basil. " I send you a little book, of which Luther is the author. It is divided into fourteen heads, and is extremely approved, even by those, who, in general, have the greatest possible aversion to his doctrines. He wrote it before matters came to the present extremities. The man has been enraged by hostile treatment ; I heartily wish, that, by the means of friendly admonitions, he might be brought back to moderate sentiments."—Seckendorf observes on this extract from Erasmus, " The disease of the church at that time was not of such a nature, that it could be cured by any of Erasmus's plasters."

suggested so many things to him during the combat, that Eckius called out to him, "Philip, hold your tongue: mind your own business, and don't interfere with mine." However, he himself tells us, that he was a mere spectator and hearer; and that he sat among the crowd. As the dispute continued many days, the different accounts might perhaps appear sufficiently consistent, were we acquainted with all the circumstances. Melancthon concludes one of his letters to Ecolampadius in the following manner: "Eckius was much admired for his many and striking ingenuities. You know Carolstadt; he is certainly a man of worth and of extraordinary erudition. As to Luther, whom I have long known most intimately, his lively genius, his learning, and eloquence, are the objects of my admiration; and it is impossible not to be in love with his truly sincere and pure Christian spirit."

As the reader by this time must be tolerably acquainted with the ecclesiastical combat at Leipsic, it will be unnecessary to detain him any longer with particulars from Melancthon's report of that famous controversy. The name of this great man is here introduced, chiefly for the purpose of showing, how the Roman-catholic expectations of the effect of the ostentatious challenge of Eckius were frustrated in every way. Melancthon was then only about twenty-three years of age; and, as yet, had employed his time principally in the duties of his Greek professorship, and in the cultivation of general literature. Already indeed he had favoured Luther's intentions of teaching pure Christianity, and of delivering it from the reigning darkness and superstition; but his wishes in this respect had hitherto originated in the native candour and benevolence of his temper, and in his abhorrence of all disguise, artifice, and tyranny, rather than in any distinct insight which he had acquired into particular instances of the corruption of christian doctrine, or of the shameful practices of the ecclesiastical domination. The conferences at Leipsic seem to have had a mighty effect in first determining this elegant scholar to employ his talents in the study of theology. As Melancthon is said to have possessed the rare faculty of "discerning truth in its

most intricate connexions and combinations," it was not probable that such a person should be moved either by the flimsy objections of Eckius, or by his pompous display of scholastic arguments. He was not, however, blind to the dangerous influence of a man, who had some pretensions to learning, who had a strong memory, and who, being constantly impelled by ambitious hopes of advancement, and unrestrained by modesty or conscience, was ever ready to make the most positive assertions. In listening to the sophistry of this papal advocate, Melancthon became better acquainted than before with the argumentative resources of the Romish religion; at the same time that the solid reasonings of Luther, supported by constant appeals to the Scriptures, effectually convinced his mind of the soundness of the principles of his industrious and persecuted friend, and determined him to embark, in the cause of religious liberty, with zeal and fidelity. From the period of this famous public disputation, he applied himself most intensely to the interpretation of the Scriptures, and the defence of pure Christian doctrine; and he is justly esteemed by Protestants to have been, under Divine Providence, the most powerful coadjutor of the Saxon Reformer. His mild and peaceable temper, his aversion to schismatic contention, his reputation for piety and for knowledge, and, above all, his happy art of exposing error and maintaining truth in the most perspicuous language, all these endowments concurred to render him eminently serviceable to the revival of the religion of Christ. Little did Eckius imagine, that the public disputation, in which he had foreseen nothing but victory, and exultation, and the downfall of Lutheranism, would give rise to another theological champion, who should contend for Christian truth and Christian liberty with the primitive spirit of an apostle. At Wittenberg, Melancthon had probably been well acquainted with Luther's lectures on divinity; but it was in the citadel of Leipsic, that he heard the Romish tenets defended by all the arguments that ingenuity could devise; there his suspicions were strengthened respecting the evils of the existing hierarchy; and there his righteous spirit was roused to imitate, in the grand object of his future in-

quiries and exertions, the indefatigable endeavours of his zealous and adventurous friend.

The pious reader will not think this relation tedious. In the event and consequences of the ecclesiastical conflict between the Romish and the Protestant advocates, he will see much cause to adore the wisdom and goodness of that Being, "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will *."

CHAP. V.

FROM THE ATTEMPTS OF MILTITZ AND ECKIUS, TO THE CRITICAL SITUATION OF LUTHER IN 1520.

FURTHER ATTEMPTS OF MILTITZ.

THE COURAGE AND RESOLUTION OF LUTHER.

HIS LETTER TO LEO X.

HIS CRITICAL SITUATION IN 1520.

THE contest with Eckius, if we include the necessary preparations for the public debate at Leipsic, and also the continuation of the controversy, lengthened, as it was, by polemical tracts and letters, took up a considerable part of the year 1519. The abilities of this papal disputant, had been candidly acknowledged by Melancthon, in a letter to his friend Ecolampadius†; nevertheless, the general account which that letter contained of the Leipsic conflict provoked him so exceedingly, that, in the short space of three days, he published a most acrimonious reply to its author, in which he affects to treat this learned and excellent Reformer as a mere paltry grammarian, that might have some knowledge of Greek and Latin, but was unworthy the notice of a Divine who had any good pretensions to theological knowledge.

Melancthon's rejoinder to Eckius is elegant, acute, and temperate. It displays the scholar and the Christian; and at that time must have afforded no slight prognostic of the advantages which the Church of Christ would one day derive from the writings of a person of such extraor-

* Ephes. i. 11.

† See page 516.

dinary talents and religious dispositions. This performance consists of only five folio pages; but it did excellent service to the Lutheran cause*.

In the mean time, Miltitz, the pope's nuncio, was not inattentive to the object of his commission. Early in this year he had agreed with Luther, that the points in dispute should be discussed before some learned and dignified ecclesiastic in Germany, such as the archbishop, elector of Treves, or the bishop of Nuremberg. He had also personally conferred on this subject with the former prelate, who approved the plan, wrote to the elector of Saxony in prosecution of it, and made Luther himself the fairest promises of safe conduct and handsome treatment. The unsuccessful effect of these negotiations is to be ascribed to several causes. 1. The ensuing debates at Leipsic excited the attention of all Germany. The questions concerning the pope's supremacy and the nature of pontifical indulgences were then of immense importance; and it was not consistent with the reputation of Luther, that he should be absent from such a scene. 2. Moreover, during the INTERREGNUM of the empire, it appeared doubtful whether any safe conduct could be obtained, in which it might be prudent for him to confide. 3. Then he augured no good from the information which he had received, that cardinal Cajetan was certainly at Coblentz with the archbishop of Treves. 4. Cajetan, while at Coblentz, wrote a most flattering letter to the elector of Saxony, but took care not to say a single syllable concerning Luther's business.--Frederic the WISE understood this suspicious silence, and contrived to meet the archbishop of Treves at Francfort, where, as we have already observed †, it was agreed that the examination of the ecclesiastical matters should be postponed till the next German diet. 5. Miltitz himself, through the persuasions and authority of Frederic, AT LENGTH acceded to the same plan, and advised Luther to remain in Saxony, and not to think at present of undertaking a journey to Coblentz.

Further attempts of Charles Miltitz.

The Roman pontiff, it must be owned, had imposed on his nuncio a task, which was not very easy to be per-

* Op. Luth. I. 340. b.

† Page 483 of this Vol.

formed. Miltitz at first came armed with seventy attendants, for the express purpose of seizing the heretic, and carrying him prisoner to Rome. When this scheme had failed, on account of the extreme popularity of Luther, he appears to have done his utmost, in the way of kindness and condescension, to draw a recantation of errors from the Reformer. He told the elector of Saxony, that "peace and reconciliation were the objects of his wishes, but that he had great fears he should be driven to extremities. The pontiff," he said, "was highly indignant, that Luther's cause had been so long delayed, and that the culprit, in the meantime, should be allowed to continue his offensive sermons*."

Neither promises nor threatenings appear to have materially affected the firm determinations of Martin Luther. When, through humane treatment, he was most softened and most inclined to make concessions, yet he never surrendered unwarily a single article of that belief which he thought authorized by the revealed word; and when most pressed and most alarmed by tyrannical and insolent mandates, still he always resisted the unchristian proposal of unconditional retraction. Invariably he offered to submit his tenets to the authority of the word of God, and continued to insist on the unreasonableness of requiring him to yield implicitly to the mere dictates of arbitrary power. Finding that no means were employed but those of imperious, pontifical despotism, he began more and more to suspect that the ecclesiastical monarch, who domineered in the church in so absolute and presumptuous a manner, must be the very Antichrist described in Scripture. But the conviction was gradual; the effect of sober thought and study. Sudden impressions on the imagination were little regarded by Luther. He particularly informs us, that he was not one of those, who pretended to see, at the first glance, the full force and meaning of the word of God†."

What might have been the result of a conference at Coblentz, under the direction of the elector of Treves, we are left to conjecture. Certainly Luther himself apprehended much danger from that measure, as circumstances

* Seck. p. 63.

† Luth. Op. præf. Vol. I.

then were. "Chas. Miltitz," said he, "is so ridiculous, that he would have me go to Coblenz, and defend myself before the archbishop, elector of Treves, in the presence of cardinal Cajetan; and yet this pleasant man owns, that he has received no precept from Rome concerning the matter. Every where, from all quarters, and by any method, I perceive, my life is sought *!!!"

Towards the end of this same year 1519, Luther began to preach on the propriety of administering to the laity the communion in BOTH KINDS. This step gave great offence to George duke of Saxony, who complained to his nephew, the elector, of the violent proceedings of the Wittemberg theologian. He accused him of having published a sermon on the Eucharist, which contained great marks of pride and self-sufficiency. He admonished Frederic to beware of supporting a man, however eminent for learning and talents, who had the presumption to suppose that nobody but himself was sufficiently enlightened by the grace of God to teach true religion. The tenets of Luther, concerning the Sacrament, he said, very much resembled those of the Bohemian heretics; and that in fact, since the publication of his sermon on that subject, it was reported, the number of those disobedient sectarians amounted to more than six thousand. Lastly, he put the elector in mind, that for a long time he had justly merited the reputation of a WISE prince and good Christian; but that at present he was in considerable danger of disgracing both himself and his country, by supporting licentious innovations in religion. "If he did not take care, Luther would soon cease to be called the professor of Wittemberg, and would become the bishop, or rather the heresiarch, of Bohemia."

Luther's
sentiments
on the
Eucharist:
A. D. 1519.

George of
Saxony
accuses
Luther to
the elector.

The elector of Saxony replied with his usual caution, declaring, that he had never ventured, nor would venture, to defend either the sermons or the disputations of his Wittemberg professor of divinity. On that point, he said, he had constantly held precisely the same language, both to the cardinal legate, and also to Miltitz the nuncio of his holiness; and that

The elector's
answer to
George.

* Luth. Epist. 110 and 111. Lib. I.

he should continue to pursue the same system of conduct;—that is, he should not say one word on the merits of Luther's publication, but leave it to be defended by the author himself, who had appealed to the wisdom and authority of learned and impartial judges, and who was certainly bound to wait respectfully the event of their inquiry and decision. The elector owned, that, notwithstanding much clamour had been raised against the discourse or little treatise of his learned professor, he had heard that it was highly approved by many wise and skilful persons as a truly Christian composition. Whether the report was well founded, he knew not; but he felt it painful to be told, that in his own dominions heresies were spreading; and still more painful to be suspected of giving them his countenance.

In this business the dukes of Saxony conducted themselves agreeably to their respective characters. George was bigoted to the superstitious maxims in which he had been educated, and wished to restrain Luther by the strong hand of despotic power. Frederic, both more enlightened and more conscientious, at all times gladly promoted the progress of Evangelical truth, but dreaded to be held up as a principal actor in scenes of so much contention and danger, and which called for clearer and better digested principles than he had yet acquired. In the meantime Luther steadily followed the track pointed out to him by a diligent and persevering study of the Holy Scriptures. He had broached the question concerning the communion in both kinds, and it was not his way to abandon, for slight causes, such pursuits in religion as he conceived important. Early therefore, in the year 1520, he defended his sermon concerning the nature of the Sacrament, by publishing in the German language an explicit declaration of his sentiments on that subject. He did not insist upon the point as matter of strict right, but contented himself, as yet, with expressing a wish that the Church would pass a decree, for the purpose of granting to the laity the communion in BOTH kinds. He said, that the Bohemians, who had obtained liberty from the Church to administer the Lord's Supper in the manner which he now recom-

Luther de-
fends his
sentiments
on the
Eucharist,

A. D. 1520.

mended, ought not to be accounted heretics ; and that in regard to the remainder of the Hussite multitudes, he had no certain information of their doctrines. All he knew was, that they were a persecuted people, and were compelled to perform their religious services in dens and caverns. They were accused, indeed, of committing the most horrid crimes in those secret recesses ; but the truth of the charges might well be doubted, as it was no new thing for those, who had been condemned by the court of Rome, to be calumniated with the most scandalous reports. “ Take notice, reader,” says Luther, “ how peculiarly unfortunate I am ! Hitherto I have been persecuted for my faith, and my conjectures. But now they find fault with me, merely because I express a wish that some new regulations might be made by a future council.” Then in support of his own conduct, he alleged the example of Pius II. who, before he was chosen pope, had most earnestly desired that a general council would decree liberty of marriage to the clergy*.

These spirited declarations of the Reformer did not altogether suit the temper of the elector’s court. They again exhorted him to peace and caution. But the tender conscience of Luther was not to be lulled by specious prudential lessons concerning moderation and decency. We have not Spalatinus’s letter on this occasion, but Luther’s answer will afford the necessary information. “ I am oppressed with a multitude of concerns ; and I heartily wish I could be relieved from the duty of teaching and reading lectures. Nothing could be more agreeable to me than to be loosed from this employment. But if I am to continue a teacher, I cannot comprehend the notion of yourself, my Spalatinus, and of the friends you mention, namely, that sacred theology may be taught without giving offence to the pontiffs. The Scriptures themselves, in the most explicit manner, lay open men’s abuses of the Scriptures, which abuses the pontiffs cannot bear to have mentioned. I have given up myself to this work in the name of the Lord. May his will be done ! The cause is that of mankind in general ; let us, in faith and prayer, commit the event to God,

Courage of
Luther.

* Seck. p. 95.

and we shall be safe. For what can our adversaries do? Will they murder us? They cannot do that twice. Will they asperse us as heretics? Was not Christ himself treated as a malefactor? When I contemplate HIS sufferings, I blush for shame to think that my trials should be thought so considerable, when in reality they are nothing; and so we should reckon such trials, had we right views of mortification, of self-denial, and, in a word, of the Christian cross, to which in our days we are perfect strangers. Cease then your attempts to divert me from my purpose. My enemies may rage, but I shall smile in security. I am determined to abide the event, and not to give way to any unbecoming fears. I should, indeed, be sorry to involve the prince in my concerns; otherwise, at this moment the world should see a very explicit publication of my sentiments, a publication, which though it might still more provoke the FURIES, would at the same time expose their folly."

In much the same spirit of determined resolution and of confidence in the justice of his cause, he wrote to the Luther writes to Charles V. new emperor Charles V. imploring however, in modest and submissive terms, the assistance and protection "of so great a prince." "Nothing," he said, "was nearer his heart, than that he might be permitted to discharge his duty quietly in his own little sphere. The violent and deceitful practices of others had compelled him to appear in public; but the very best men living, as well as his own conscience, would witness, that his sole object was, the propagation of Evangelical truth, in opposition to the superstitions of human tradition. For this cause, continues he, during almost three years I have been persecuted in every way that my enemies could invent. In vain have I proposed terms of peace, in vain have I offered to be silent, in vain have I begged for information and correction of my errors. After having tried all methods without success, I have judged it advisable to follow the example of St. Athanasius, in applying to your imperial majesty, if so be it may please God in that way to protect his own cause. I humbly therefore beseech your most serene majesty, that as you bear the sword for the praise of the good and the punishment of

the bad, you would deign to take under the shadow of your wings the cause of truth; and as to myself, I crave your support not one moment longer than while I shall appear to have reason on my side. Abandon me the instant I am found impious or heretical. All I beg is, that my doctrines, whether true or false, may not be condemned unheard and without examination. If your most sacred majesty, by your interposition, should prevent the exercise of tyrannical power, such a conduct would be worthy of your royal and imperial throne, would adorn your government, and consecrate to posterity the age in which you live*."

The various letters and publications of Luther, at the critical periods of these memorable years, contribute more towards laying open the real disposition and secret views of this Reformer, than whole volumes of controversial writings. The curious and industrious reader will, therefore, excuse me for detailing many circumstances of this part of ecclesiastical history with more than ordinary minuteness. They are closely connected with the very essence of the Reformation and the revival of Evangelical doctrine.

When men's PRINCIPLES are unsettled, we naturally look for inconsistency in their PRACTICE. Yet, after a very diligent review of the most authentic records concerning the great Saxon Reformer, I am convinced, that it will be found no easy matter to fix on his character any charge of inconsistent conduct. The man never does violence to his conscience; he is always in quest of information from the purest sources; and he is constantly obedient "to the powers that be," as long as submission to those powers, in his judgment, does not clash with the Divine Will. On these grounds let his life be examined and tried, and it will not disappoint his greatest admirers. Luther will appear as honest and indefatigable in investigating truth, as he was resolute and intrepid in defending it.

It may be almost superfluous to mention, how entirely the preceding letters and declarations of our Reformer harmonize with this representation of his motives; and

* Epistol. Luth. ad Carol. V.

a similar observation is applicable to several other of his performances, which made their appearance about the same time*.

1. To the censures of the Divines of Louvain and Cologne, he published a very animated reply, following their strictures article by article. He said, they had not produced against him the shadow of a reason; but had treated him with more than Turkish cruelty and arrogance. In opposing Eckius and his advocates, he owned, he had been compelled to use some exertion; but, on the contrary, in reading the empty and wretched sentence of these universities he felt his spirits depressed, so as to be more disposed to weep over them, than to write a reply. Anti-christ could not be far off, when men set up themselves so impudently above the written word of God. It was to him a consolatory reflection, that many worthy men had been unjustly condemned in a similar way, as Occam, Valla, Picus, Wesselus, and even the great Erasmus. He had no hesitation in adding to the list the names of John Huss, and Jerom of Prague, whose victorious fame at the council of Constance,—not to mention the celebrated letter of Poggius the Florentine†,—neither all the popes nor universities together would ever be able to extinguish. The theologians of Louvain and Cologne had been wanting both in charity and in justice. They had condemned him without warning, admonition, or hearing: all this was directly contrary to the maxims of Christianity. In regard to the pope, they had treated him with the greatest indecorum. They had passed sentence on a book which was dedicated to him, and humbly laid at his feet; and this at the very time, when the author was waiting for the judgment of his holiness. On the whole, Luther considers these Divines, as decidedly of the Pelagian stamp; as persons who did not submit cordially to Scripture, but fabricated a religion of their own imagination, which in its nature was opposite to the grace and Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2. In the negotiations between Miltitz and Luther, it had been agreed that the latter should publish a concise

* The beginning of 1520.

† See p. 377 of this Vol.

protestation of his faith, and of his firm adherence to the Roman-catholic church ; and that he should endeavour to express himself in the most obsequious and conciliatory terms. This protestation came out in January 1520, and runs very much in the same strain ^{Luther's protestation,} as the letter to the new emperor Charles V. ^{A.D. 1520.} which is already before the reader. He also calls God to witness, That, as far as he knew, he had never said a word, either in his school or the pulpit, which was adverse to the Word of God, or the salvation of men's souls ; that he was so sincere and obedient to the Holy Church, as to be willing to die in her cause ; that at any time, upon a safe conduct being ensured to him, he was ready to appear before judges both secular and spiritual ; and that, though every thing he had done was for the glory of God, and the good of all the Christian world, without the least prospect of private advantage in any imaginable way, still he met with no other return but to be traduced as a heretic. From the bottom of his heart, he said, he forgave his enemies ; and he entreated them in the name of Almighty God, to form a more favourable judgment of his motives, and to abstain from calumniating him in so rash and unbecoming a manner*.

The native good sense of Luther, as well as his gratitude to the elector of Saxony, would, doubtless, induce him to be as temperate and conciliatory in his language, as was consistent with the convictions of a man who regulated his actions entirely by the Will of God. Therefore, among his reasons for writing, at this same time, modest and submissive letters to two German bishops, we may reckon his respect for the Saxon court. He entreated the archbishop of Mentz, not to give credit to his calumniators, who, he said, consisted of two classes ;—one of which had never read his writings, and the other were actuated altogether by the most bitter animosity. On the same day and to the same purport, he addressed the bishop of Mersburg. The archbishop replied, that as he had never read his writings, he was not disposed to censure them ; but it was with great grief, that he heard of the violent disputes of celebrated professors respecting

* Seck. p. 95. Luth. Op. Vol. I.

frivolous opinions and points of little consequence, such as of free-will, and the pope's power, whether it be of Divine or of human authority. Such amusements were by no means becoming a true Christian ; but rather tended to excite a hurtful curiosity, and foment disobedience among the people. He understood also, that the authority of GENERAL COUNCILS had been disparaged by some persons, who adhered to their own opinions most pertinaciously. This sort of conduct produced much mischief. In private, and among learned persons, questions of that nature might, perhaps, be handled advantageously, and certainly with less danger than before an ignorant and ill-judging multitude. Lastly, he highly approved of his teaching the great truths of Scripture, provided he gave his lectures in a spirit of peace and obedience to the established church.

The answer of the bishop of Mersburg is concise, and borders on severity. He could not understand, and he exceedingly disliked, those heavy censures of the Roman pontiff. He lamented that Luther had injected scruples into the minds of the people concerning the Sacrament : and, in his judgment, a man of such signal industry might employ his talents in a manner, that should be more conducive to the promotion of Christian charity, and the salvation of mankind.—This bishop calls Luther his “ Venerable brother.”—The archbishop of Mentz addresses him with the terms, “ Honourable, religious, and beloved in Christ.”

But besides what have been mentioned, there are other writings of Luther, of nearly the same date, and of much greater importance.

His celebrated letter to the pontiff Leo X. in the year 1520, and his treatise on Christian Liberty, were the effect of the last effort of Charles Miltitz, to produce a reconciliation between the Reformer and the court of Rome. As Luther was an ecclesiastic of the Augustine order, Miltitz endeavoured to persuade the fathers of that fraternity to depute, from their general assembly, then held in Saxony, some persons who should persuade their refractory brother to desist from his opposition to the lawful commands of

Luther's
letter to the
pope,
A.D. 1520.

his superiors. This measure was tried ; and Luther received the deputation with the most kind and dutiful attention ; and very soon afterwards he had a friendly conference with Miltitz himself. A distinct account of this part of the negotiation of the pope's nuncio is contained in the following letter of Luther to Spalatinus* ; and it is the more expedient that we should have recourse to this authentic document, because the whole affair has been miserably misrepresented by papal writers, and particularly by Maimbourg †, who compares Luther to the traitor Judas, and the Augustinian fathers to the holy apostles. "Miltitz and myself," says Luther, "met at Litchtemberg ; and we have agreed upon the following terms,—from which HE entertains the most sanguine hopes. I am to print and publish some little tract, and preface it with a letter to the pontiff. That letter is to contain a narrative of my proceedings, and an assurance that I never intended any personal affront to his holiness ; at the same time I am allowed to lay a heavy load of blame upon Eckius. As this plan is founded in the most perfect truth, it is impossible that I should have the smallest objection to it. In the most submissive manner, I mean to propose silence on both sides ; in order that nothing of a conciliatory nature may be omitted on my part. I need not tell you, that it has always been my wish to bring about peace. I shall have every thing ready in a few days. If the event should answer our hopes, all will be well ; but if it should not, I still have no doubt but GOOD will be the consequence ‡."

This is evidently the language of a man who was not very anxious concerning the success of the project in contemplation. The popish advocates go much further, and accuse the Reformer of actual insincerity towards the Roman See. His humble professions of obedience, his wishes for peace and unity, and his decorous treatment of the person of Leo X. they think, were all downright hypocrisy, and designed to serve no other purpose than that of gaining time, and rendering the pontificate ridiculous§.

* Lib. I. Ep. 141. † Maimbourg, in Seck. p. 94. ‡ Seck. p. 98.
Pallavicini.—Maimbourg.

But these rash charges will not be regarded for a moment by any one who attends to the unfeigned disclosures which Luther repeatedly made of his most secret sentiments. Early in the year 1520, he writes to Spalatinus thus: "I am extremely distressed in my mind. I have not much doubt but the pope is the real Antichrist. The lives and conversation of the popes, their actions, their decrees, all agree most wonderfully to the descriptions of him in Holy Writ." It is to these views of the true nature of the papacy,—which were every day becoming clearer in Luther's mind,—that we are to ascribe that species of indifference with which he looked to the termination of the present negotiation. The man who was almost convinced of the antichristian character of the whole Romish system, could feel no great anxiety to obtain the approbation of the sovereign pontiff. With a truly Christian spirit he seems to have resigned the event to the Divine disposal, and to have cherished a full persuasion in his own mind, that some great good to the Church of God would result from the step which he was about to take. If the court of Rome should adopt prudent and temperate counsels, a reformation of abuses and a revival of pure religion might still take place under the established hierarchy; and if they continued to turn a deaf ear to entreaty, advice, and remonstrance, such presumption and arrogance would more strongly mark the features of Antichrist, and hasten his downfall.

It must be owned, however, that it was no easy matter for the Saxon Reformer, in his present state of mind and circumstances, to devise an epistle to a haughty pontiff, which should exhibit a becoming sense of subordination, do justice to his own conscience and cause, and, at the same time, escape the animadversion and censure of his enemies. But the honest mind of Luther, by simplicity and plain-dealing, often effected that, which it would have puzzled an intriguing minister of state to compass by the most artful policy. He has not indeed, on this occasion, escaped the opposite charges of hypocritical courtesy and of audacious insolence; but as these have been made only

by bigoted and ill-informed zealots of the Roman religion, we may dismiss the slander without further notice*. The epistle to Leo, as well as the treatise on Christian Liberty which accompanied it, are extant, and are lasting monuments of the good sense, integrity, and firmness of their author. They also merit particular attention, on account of their being among the last, if not the very last, of Luther's writings, in which he professes obedience to the Romish church and to pontifical authority. Having already adverted, more than once†, to the motives which probably induced him to treat the rulers of that church in a reverential manner, long after he had seen just cause to mourn over their scandalous practices, it will be unnecessary to make further remarks on the civil and dutiful terms in which he addresses Leo X. Every considerate person must allow, that while Luther remained a member of the Roman-catholic communion, he was bound upon all occasions of intercourse with his superiors, to use the decent and customary language of a subordinate ecclesiastic.

That truly excellent and judicious protestant, Seckendorf, in his Historical Commentary on Lutheranism, calls on all the bitterest enemies of the Reformation, to lay aside their prejudices, to read over and over again Luther's last letter to the pontiff, and not to stifle the honest convictions of their judgment and conscience. They cannot, he thinks, but admit, how well contrived it was to stir up the mind of Leo to a serious investigation and correction of abuses. It treated the pope himself with the greatest tenderness and respect, while the rash, impolitic proceedings of Cajetan and Eckius were exposed in just strains of censure and reproach. The whole letter is much too long to find a place in this history. A general account of it will, however, be expected; and the rather, as it may seem surprising that Seckendorf, who on most occasions is sufficiently copious in his extracts, and who reckons this composition among the few writings which are truly admirable, does not produce a syllable of it among his numerous articles and additions‡.

* Pallavicini.—Maimbourg.

† Pages 392—4, & 409 of this Vol.

‡ Sleidan gives the substance of it in brief; and the whole is to be found in Luther's Works, Vol. II Witt.

In the exordium of his letter, Luther declares, that though he had been compelled, by the persecutions of such as flattered his holiness, to appeal from the Roman See to a future council, yet he had never harboured the least ill will to the pontiff, but had always prayed God to bestow upon his person and See every kind of blessing. He had learnt, he said, to despise, in general, the threats of those who were continually alarming him with the pontifical vengeance ; nevertheless it gave him pain to be represented as one who had not spared even the pope himself. Such an accusation he could not treat lightly, as it was in fact, he said, the true cause of that very letter to his holiness, which he was then writing.

Luther's
letter to
the pope
Leo X.

He owned, that he had treated the impious doctrines of his adversaries with much severity ; and he was so far from repenting of what he had done in that respect, that, whatever man's judgment might be, he intended zealously to persevere in the same practice. He was supported by the example of Christ, of St. Paul, and the prophets ; whereas the delicate ears of the present age, accustomed to nothing but most pernicious flattery, could not endure plain truths. He was not, however, conscious that he had in any instance spoken of the PERSON of the present pontiff in a manner which was not highly respectful ; and if he had really done otherwise, there was nothing which he more thoroughly disapproved, or would be more ready to retract. Moreover, he said, that Leo X. was so generally celebrated for leading a blameless life, that it would not be in the power of the greatest character to injure his unsullied reputation. He was not yet so stupid as to think of attacking a man whom every body praised. Besides, it had never been, nor ever should be his practice, to inveigh even against those who were notorious for bad morals. It gave him no pleasure to dwell on the faults of any man ; he was sufficiently conscious of the beam in his own eye, and would never be the first to cast a stone at the adulterous woman. His sole object, his sole contention, related to the DIVINE WORD. Every thing else he was ready to give up to any person, but he could never

give up his right to set forth the WORD OF TRUTH. Whoever had conceived differently, either of him or his writings, had mistaken the matter.

But the pope's SEE, or, in other words, the COURT OF ROME, neither Leo nor any man living could deny, was more corrupt than Babylon and Sodom. Luther declared, that he considered that court as desperately wicked; he detested it; he had withstood it, and should continue to withstand it as long as he preserved any thing of the spirit of the Gospel. It was a most licentious den of thieves: Antichrist could add nothing to its impiety. What can a pope do among such monsters of wickedness, even supposing him to be supported by three or four learned and excellent cardinals? He is like a lamb in the midst of wolves, as a Daniel among the lions, or as an Ezekiel among scorpions.

He most sincerely wished that Leo X. could be induced to live on his own patrimony, or on some petty ecclesiastical preferment, and resign the pontificate, which in reality was now only fit for those sons of perdition who flattered him on account of his glorious pre-eminence. O! Leo, said he, you sit on a most inauspicious and dangerous throne. The more wicked and execrable your court is, the more readily do they use your name and authority, to ruin the fortunes and the souls of the people, to multiply their villanies, and to oppress the whole Church of God. I speak the truth, because I wish you well. If Bernard, with an honest freedom, deplored the situation of pope Eugenius, at a time when there was room for better hopes of the court of Rome,—though even then very corrupt,—why may not we, after an accumulation of most ruinous corruptions for upwards of three hundred years, be allowed to speak freely? Those, who thus complain and execrate the court of Rome, are your best friends, and do you the best services. Nothing can be more opposite to Christ and his religion than the practices of the Roman See.

He said, he could go still further, and honestly declare, that to inveigh even against the corrupt court of Rome, was a thought which had never entered his mind. He

had considered the case of that court as desperate ; he had said, " He that is filthy, let him be filthy still * ;" and he had actually given himself up to the study of the holy Scriptures, with the view of being useful to his brethren with whom he lived in the university.

While he was prosecuting this plan, in a peaceable and quiet manner, and with a fair prospect of success, John Eckius, laying hold of a single word, which had casually escaped him, concerning the supremacy of the Roman church, had drawn him unexpectedly into a public disputation. This ostentatious Thraso pretended to venture every thing for the glory of God and the honour of the apostolic See ; whereas in reality he was seeking, not the supremacy of St. Peter, but his own rank and aggrandizement among the divines of the age ; and, in this view, he had supposed it might be of considerable use to him, if he could drag Luther in triumph. Puffed up with the idea of being able to abuse the papal authority to his own purposes, the sophist had looked forward to certain victory ; and now that he had utterly failed, he was carried away with the most outrageous passion, conscious that it was by his own fault, and not Luther's, if the latter, in defending himself, had said any thing which might discredit the Roman See.

Luther then entreated the pope, that he might be permitted to say a word in support of his own cause, and also to point out those who are the real ENEMIES of his holiness. He took it for granted that Leo was well acquainted with the proceedings of his imprudent, unfortunate, nay, unfaithful legate, cardinal Cajetan. This man, he said, might have composed all the differences with a single word. He had only to prescribe to Luther's adversaries the same silence, which on that condition, Luther had promised to preserve. Whereas, not content with this fair compromise, he began to justify the licentious practices of his enemies, and to insist upon a recantation from him, even when the pontifical mandates by no means warranted so tyrannical a demand. Thus the pleasing hopes of an accommodation had been ruined,

* Revel. xxii. 11.

and the dissension much exasperated. All the mischief which followed was to be ascribed entirely to Cajetan, and not to Luther, who in vain had exerted every nerve to procure peace and silence.

Charles Miltitz, he said, had used his utmost endeavours to repair the harm which had been caused by the pride and temerity of Cajetan; but had been prevented from bringing matters to a successful issue, by the unreasonable disputations of ECKIUS. This was the name of the pope's real enemy. He was a man who did not seek truth, but glory; a man, who, by falsehood, pretence, and artifice, had from the beginning of these troubles done every thing he could to confound men's judgments and inflame their passions; and who, it could not be denied, had brought to light, through his selfish and intemperate conduct, many of the ignominious corruptions of the court of Rome.

From this instance, he said, the pope might learn, that no enemy was more pernicious than a flatterer. At this very time the papal authority languished; even the name of the Roman court excited disgust; while its disgraceful ignorance was the topic of common conversation. Little or nothing might have been said of these things, if the conciliatory measures of Miltitz and himself had not been defeated by Eckius.

Lastly, Luther informed the pope, that some principal persons of his own order, at the particular instance of Miltitz, had requested him to address his holiness in respectful terms; to defend at the same time his innocence with becoming humility; and to express a hope, that the native goodness of Leo X. would devise some expedient by which the misunderstanding between them might be prevented from being pushed to the last extremity. He said, this measure so entirely harmonized with what he had always offered and wished, that now, with the greatest humility, he besought his holiness to impose silence upon those flatterers, who, while they pretended peace, were enemies of peace. But NO PERSON, he added, must desire him to RECANT, unless he intended to increase the dissensions. He further distinctly stated,

that he could not permit ANY RULES to be prescribed to him for the interpretation of the word of God : the word of God ought not to be fettered. If these two points were granted, there was nothing that he would not most willingly either do or suffer. He hated contests, and would take care to irritate no man. His holiness, by an easy mandate, could bring the present cause before himself, and enjoin the parties to be silent and to live in peace. It had long been his wish that this step might be taken.

He concluded, with admonishing Leo not to be seduced by those flatterers, who would make him a sort of god, and would persuade him, that he can command and require every thing ; who call him the lord of the whole world, deny that any thing truly Christian can exist without his authority, and idly prate concerning his power in heaven, in hell, and in purgatory. These, Luther said, were the real enemies of the pope, and sought the destruction of his soul : So says the prophet Isaiah, " O my people, they which call thee BLESSED, cause thee to err*." Those greatly erred, who placed the pope above a general council and the universal Church, and who attributed to him alone the right of interpreting Scripture. All such persons were at this moment endeavouring to establish their own impieties in the Church under the protection of Leo ; and it was much to be lamented that, through people of this description, Satan had had great success, during the times of the predecessors of the present pope.

If he should be thought to have used too great freedom in addressing so dignified a personage, a strong sense of duty must be his apology. He well knew the infinite dangers to which Leo was exposed at Rome, insomuch that the smallest assistance, even from his meanest brother, might be serviceable. He might perhaps have forgotten the majesty of the pope, while he was discharging the duty of benevolence ; but he had determined to avoid all flattery in a business so weighty and full of danger ; and if, in what he had said, he was not considered as

* Chap. iii. ver. 12. There is a peculiar propriety in this quotation ; Beatissime, et Beatitudo, being the terms commonly used in addressing the pope.

something more than the pope's most obedient subject, if he was not understood to be his true friend, THERE WAS ONE, WHO COULD BOTH UNDERSTAND AND JUDGE.

That he might not approach his holiness empty, Luther said, he presented him a little treatise on Christian Liberty. As an omen of his good hope and future reconciliation, he had ventured to dedicate it to Leo X. himself. From the perusal of it a judgment might be formed, in what kind of studies its author would have chosen to spend his time, if he might have been permitted.

The small treatise on Christian Liberty was regarded by its author as a COMPENDIUM of the Christian life. In the beginning of it he says, He was conscious of his want of knowledge, and he had no pretensions to elegance; but having struggled through many and various temptations, he hoped he had learnt something of the nature of faith, and could speak of it more practically than those subtle verbal disputants, who scarcely understood their own meaning.

Luther's
Treatise on
Christian
Liberty.

He premises two axioms, which, in appearance, contradict each other, but which in reality, he said, would be found perfectly consistent.

1. A Christian man is of all men the most completely free; and is subject to none.

2. A Christian man is of all men the most ready to serve others, and is subject to every one*.

In illustration of the former, he shows that the Christian is justified and filled with all good, and made a true son of God by faith alone. "And though," says he, "he is abundantly justified inwardly, according to the Spirit, through faith, possessing whatever he ought to have,—except that the principle of faith ought to grow stronger in him day by day,—yet, while he remains upon earth in this mortal state, he must keep his body in subjection, and perform those duties which result from an intercourse with his fellow-creatures. Here then it is, in the Christian scheme, that WORKS are to be placed; here it is that sloth and indolence are forbidden; and here the convert

is bound to take care that, by fasting, watching, labour, and other suitable means, his body be so exercised and subdued to the spirit, that it may obey and conform to the inward and new man, and not rebel and obstruct the operations of faith, as it is naturally inclined to do, if not restrained. For the inward man, being created after the image of God, by faith rejoices through Christ, in whom he possesses so great treasure; and hence his only employment and delight is to serve God freely in love."

He elucidates the second axiom by describing the secret reflections of a truly humble Christian. "Behold! on me, a miserable mortal and worthy of condemnation, God, of his mere pity and kindness, without the least merit on my part, hath bestowed all the riches of his righteousness and salvation, so that I no more stand in need of any thing except faith, by which I may appropriate and secure these blessings. To such a Father, who overwhelms me with his inestimable loving kindness, must I not liberally, cheerfully, and with my whole heart do every thing which I shall know to be pleasing in his sight? I therefore, after the example of Christ, and as far as I am capable of imitating him, would give up myself to my neighbour, as Christ hath given up himself for me; I am determined to do nothing in this life, except what I shall see to be conducive to his good, since by faith I myself abound in all blessings through Christ."

He proceeds to show, that papal, episcopal, monastic, ecclesiastical, and political mandates, ought to be obeyed, in many instances, from a regard to the express will of God; in others, from a sense of the expediency of the injunctions; and again in others, from a principle of pure benevolence, which, in imitation of our Lord, performs and endures many things not in their own nature necessary, for the sake of peace and order, and that offence may not be given to our fellow-creatures. "Thus," continues Luther, "a man, who has a right notion of this subject, may decide for himself without danger in an infinity of cases. A free Christian man will say, 'I will fast, I will pray, I will do this, or that, because men have ordered me to do so. It is not that the thing is neces-

sary to my justification or salvation, but I shall hereby comply with the wishes or directions of the pope, the bishop, the community, the magistrate, or lastly, my neighbour. I will do and suffer all things, as Christ voluntarily did and suffered much more for me, and became subject to the law on my account.' Nay, even though tyrants should use compulsion and violence, the rule of submission continues still the same, as long as nothing is required which is contrary to God's commandments. But then we must never think, that by such acts of external obedience, we make an atonement for our sins, or purchase salvation; for by these means Christian liberty is totally extinguished, as must ever be the case where the true principles of Christian faith are not known."

There were some, he said, who would vitiate the very best doctrines, and the very best discourses, by misunderstanding them. Let such persons try if they could understand the few words he was about to say. "Many impure characters, when they hear of this liberty of the Gospel, use it for an occasion to the flesh, and form no other idea of Christian freedom than an exemption from all rules and ordinances. They greedily lay hold of this exemption, and pay no regard to things which relate essentially to the Christian religion.—Let us hearken to the Scripture, and turn not from it to the right hand or to the left*. By that unerring guide it appears, that as no man is justified by his attention to works and ritual observances, so neither is he justified by the neglect and contempt of them. The faith of Christ does not free us from the necessity of performing good works, but from the presumption of seeking justification by them. Rules and precepts are necessary to be observed in human life. Impetuous and inexperienced youth must be disciplined by useful labour, and the body must be brought into subjection by these means. A prudent and faithful minister of Christ will instruct his people in these things, but in so guarded a manner, as to prevent, so far as in him lies, the prevalence of a self-righteous spirit. For this is easily introduced, unless faith be constantly inculcated. If faith

* Galatians v.

be kept out of sight, and human constitutions alone be taught, pestilent and impious traditions, which ruin the soul, will bear all the sway in the Church, as is at present the case of the Christian world ; pontiffs and schoolmen will confound the minds of men by their decrees and sentences ; and an infinite number of souls will be dragged into perdition ; so that Antichrist will appear indeed in all his horrors."

Luther had repeatedly expressed a wish, that he might have leisure to attend to useful subjects, and not be continually diverted from them by polemical disputes. In the treatise, of which the substance of some remarkable passages has been laid before the reader, he seems to have given a specimen of what he conceived to be salutary, practical doctrine : And, though he cannot, as yet, be supposed to have arrived at perfect accuracy in his views of the Gospel, every intelligent student of divinity will see the lineaments of true Christianity. The subjects which he treats are in their own nature mysterious, and by no means agreeable to the prejudices of human nature in its present state. EVANGELICAL TRUTH itself appears to stand between two precipices, equally destructive, Self-righteousness and Antinomianism. To describe it in such a manner as to leave it liable to neither of these imputations, is no easy matter. Even those, who, by sound experience, are practical adepts in the Gospel-mystery, are not always happy in conveying wholesome instruction to others. Language itself is apt to sink under the weight of the real doctrines of grace, and proves unequal to the description of that spiritual understanding which furnishes the CHRISTIAN HEART with conceptions peculiarly scriptural. Is it to be wondered at, therefore, that the man, who, after a silence of many centuries, first undertook to arrange and methodize the doctrines of the Gospel according to the principles of the New Testament, should not always be able to do full justice to his subject ? In explaining, however, the principles of Christian liberty, and in guarding them against evils and abuses on the right hand and the left, he seems, on the whole, to have preserved the due medium ; and it is a marvellous in-

stance of Divine goodness, that the first completely evangelical Reformer could unite such uncommon vehemence of spirit with so much good sense, and so great nicety of judicious discrimination.

From these extracts and quotations, we also see how far remote the author was from being a turbulent, schismatical, licentious demagogue. Convinced as he now was, that the bishop of Rome had no divine jurisdiction, he so far revered the providence of God in establishing systems of government, and continuing them for ages among mankind, that he was willing to try whether scriptural truths might not be taught and supported in the Christian world without the convulsion of a complete separation. Nor were his suspicions of the entirely anti-christian nature of the popedom confirmed, till he found by experience that an evangelical ministry could not subsist under so corrupt an hierarchy.—With what extreme ignorance, then, of authentic ecclesiastical documents, do many factious spirits undertake to justify their turbulence and temerity by the example of Martin Luther!

The Romish writer, Maimbourg, gives the following account of the Treatise on Christian Liberty. “Luther sent it to the pope for the purpose of insulting him. He represents faith as doing every thing. It justifies us, it makes us free, it saves us; and all this without the help of good works, which are of no use towards salvation, even though they proceed from faith.”

From Mons. Du Pin, who, of all the papal advocates, is in general by far the most candid and the most to be relied on, one might have expected a more ingenuous and instructive criticism, especially on a work which lays aside all speculative disquisition, and treats only of the essential doctrines of the Gospel, and the way which every individual sinner must seek eternal salvation. Though sufficiently prolix in other matters, he gives but a sentence or two respecting this treatise. “It is,” says he, “full of pious maxims, but he maintains in it his ERROR of justification by faith alone. Yet, he tells us, he does not reject good works, but, on the contrary, exhorts men to the practice of them; but he condemns those who do them

with an opinion to be justified by them, and is persuaded that they make no man just."

The pious Christian will have no difficulty in determining where, in these instances, the charge of error and misrepresentation ought to rest, though he may, perhaps, be a little surprised to see, that in former, as well as in modern times, the leading truths of the Gospel, in spite of every care to interpret them clearly, and guard them from erroneous construction, were opposed, misunderstood, and misrepresented. The fact is, men, in all ages and under all circumstances, naturally dislike the pure doctrines of grace; they are ignorant of God's righteousness; they go about to establish their own righteousness, and do not submit themselves to the righteousness of God*. It was, I conceive, a strong conviction of this natural dislike, which induced the author of the treatise we have now reviewed, to put his readers, at the conclusion, in mind of the important truth,—namely,

“That there was therefore need of PRAYER to God, that he would be pleased to incline us towards himself and make us teachable, and write his laws in our hearts, according to his promise,—otherwise, we are ruined for ever. For unless he himself inwardly teach us this wisdom, which is so hidden in mystery, mere nature will constantly disapprove it and reject it. The reason is, nature looks on it as foolishness, and takes offence at it.”—This is a most valuable observation of Luther. He had his eye on the great, essential doctrine of justification by faith, which was always his favourite theme. He had taken peculiar pains to secure it both from abuse and from misconception. It was only a little before, that he had said, “We are so far from rejecting good works, that we teach the necessity of them, and lay very great stress on their being done. We never say any thing against them on their own account; it is the impious notion that they can justify, which we condemn.” Still he well knew, that nothing he could say, would be effectual to reach the hearts, or even the understandings of mankind. Still they would infallibly exclaim, “This is a dangerous tenet,

* Rom. x. 3.

this is faith without works."—He therefore wisely admonishes us to pray for a divine influence; and he beseeches God to "show the light of his countenance, that HIS way may be known upon earth, his saving health among all nations."

If the least doubt could be entertained, whether the Saxon Reformer was a man both of acute understanding and indefatigable industry, it would be easy to particularize several of his excellent publications, during the years 1519, 1520, &c. which have not been mentioned. The established hierarchy had, as it could not fail to have, many supporters. The heretical innovator was attacked from all quarters; and it may be sufficient to add, that Luther always answered his enemies with perspicuity and vigour, and in several instances with great brilliancy of wit and poignant sarcasm: never was it more truly said of any man, THAT HE WAS HIMSELF A HOST.

Doubtless this extraordinary servant of God is the object of our admiration, much more than of our pity; nevertheless, when I view the champion of that Christian liberty which we at this day enjoy, calumniated, irritated, and provoked, hunted down, and almost struggling for his life, it is with infinite satisfaction that I find the eloquent pen of Melancthon begins about this time to appear, in reply to some of Luther's adversaries. With what spirit he was treading in the steps of his academical friend, may in some measure be inferred from his answer to a declamatory composition which was published at Leipsic, under the name of Thomas Radin. A short extract must however suffice; important materials crowd upon us. "The very terms, grace, faith, hope, and charity, have an entirely different meaning in the Scriptures, from THAT which fashionable divines give them in their scholastic discussions. We have not only lost the doctrine, but even the very language of Christianity. GRACE is a word which denotes SOME GIFT of God through Christ: But where does it signify, as they interpret it, A FORM OF SOUL? Or whence came the terms of FAITH INFUSED and ACQUIRED; FORMED, and UNFORMED? Where is their

Luther is
defended by
Melancthon,
A. D. 1520.

authority for teaching, that Christian minds should hope for salvation from human merits? Nay, whence is the origin of the term itself, the profane term of MERIT? Witness this madness of attributing virtue to human endeavours rather than to the work of the Divine Spirit? The Church, ye princes! appeals to your faith and piety: she entreats you, enslaved as she is by philosophy and human traditions, to emancipate her at length from her twofold Babylonian servitude." Melancthon then makes heavy complaints of the vices tolerated in the universities, and the corruptions there imbibed by youth. "I have seen," says he, "some young men, not ill-disposed, who would have wished to live and die in total ignorance of letters, rather than to have purchased knowledge at so dear a rate, who carried nothing away with them from the universities, except a guilty conscience."

If the conduct of Frederic the WISE had been influenced only by prudential and political considerations, he may seem to have been sufficiently tempted, about this period, to have entirely withdrawn his protection from Luther. He was informed by Valentine Deitleben, who was then his agent at Rome for the management of some particular business,—That, he could bring nothing to a successful issue with the Roman pontiff; That, whatever the pretence might be, he believed the real obstacles were, the offence which the new doctrines of Luther had given to the pope and his cardinals, and the public report of the encouragement and assistance which Luther himself had received from the prince.

The answer of the elector is, in substance, as follows:

We never undertook to defend or to patronize the opinions or writings of Luther; nor have we at this moment any such intention. We do not consider it as our business to pronounce what is right, or wrong, on religious subjects: Nevertheless, we will not dissemble, that we hear the tenets of THIS MAN are approved by many learned and intelligent persons. Some time ago we so far interfered, as to obtain from him a voluntary promise that he would leave

Valentine
Deitleben
is the Elec-
tor's agent
at Rome.

Luther is
supported by
the Elector of
Saxony.

our university and jurisdiction; which he would certainly have done, had not C. Miltitz, the pope's own nuncio, entreated us in the most earnest manner not to permit him to go away; for he expressed his fears, lest, in a different situation, where the man was not restrained by our authority, he might proceed to greater lengths.

As, therefore, there is not the smallest ground for suspecting us to be ill affected to the Roman See, we trust that our affairs will not meet with any obstruction from his holiness, on account of false charges and insinuations.

To you, however, we may speak without disguise. It is the common conversation here, that Martin Luther was drawn into this dispute about the pope's supremacy by Doctor Eckius, and that he has been so repeatedly provoked by abusive publications, at Rome and other places, that he found himself compelled to answer them. Moreover, as there are now in Germany abundance of ingenious and learned persons, and as the laity begin to grow skilful, and have a desire to understand the Scriptures, there is, in the opinion of many, great reason to fear, that if the pope should continue to reject the equitable proposals of Luther, and will not submit the cause to a fair and unbiassed examination, but depend merely on ecclesiastical censures, the dissensions and contests may be exceedingly exasperated, and a return to peace and harmony rendered very difficult. The doctrines of Luther have taken deep root every where, and the effect must be done away by perspicuous and incontestable testimonies of SCRIPTURE, not by ecclesiastical processes contrived to oppress him and to excite terror; otherwise, it is most probable that the bitterest animosities, and the most horrible and destructive convulsions will arise in Germany, which can be of no service either to his holiness the pope, or to any one else*.

This letter, though addressed only to the elector's own agent or commissioner, Deitleben, would doubtless find its way to the pontiff and his cardinals. Happily for the cause of Christian liberty, THESE continued to despise every kind of salutary advice, and it is well known how

* Luth. Op. Vol. II. p. 49.

the subsequent events corresponded with the intimations of the sagacious Frederic.

In effect, Leo X. listened to the advice of his most pernicious counsellors, and at length, as we shall soon see, suffered himself to be overcome by their ^{Imprudence of Leo X.} importunity. Among these we may reckon Sylvester, Prierias, and Cajetan, and especially Eckius, who, from the time of his defeat, in the disputation at Leipsic, breathed nothing but fury and resentment against Luther, and, without losing a moment, had repaired to Rome, in the full purpose of executing vengeance on the man who had lowered his pride, and checked his ambitious expectations. Instead of profiting by the prudent suggestions of Frederic, which were conveyed to the court of Rome, through Deitleben, in language sufficiently respectful, though at the same time firm and significant, the pontiff affected to understand the elector's letter of instruction to his agent in a sense directly opposite to the real one. He extolled that prince in the highest terms of commendation, for having opposed the wicked attempts of Martin Luther with so much piety and zeal ; he suppressed his knowledge of any protection that had been afforded the heretic by the court of Saxony ; and, with incredible effrontery and dissimulation, he desired the elector to be assured, that his spirited conduct on the present emergency, in resisting innovation and supporting the orthodox faith, had very much increased that good opinion which the Roman See had always entertained of his distinguished merit. In the same letter Leo declares, that he had received from the very best characters so many testimonies in praise of Frederic, as made it hard for him to say, whether the wisdom or the religion of the prince had lately been more conspicuous ? It was a proof of singular wisdom that he had given no countenance to that pestilential poisonous madman, who was reviving the seditious heresies of the Wickliffites and Hussites, which had already been condemned by the general Church ; but it was the soundness of his religious principles, which only could account for his steady adherence to the orthodox faith.

The pope concludes with informing the elector, that he had sent him a copy of the determination* of the court of Rome respecting this notorious heretic and his detestable opinions; and that he now relied upon his highness, in the first place, to exhort Luther to recant with a becoming humility; and secondly, if the man persisted in his wickedness beyond the term of sixty days, to seize his person and keep him safe for the disposal of his holiness.

This and the preceding letter are curious specimens of that species of epistolary correspondence which frequently takes place among persons in elevated situations, where the writers perfectly understand each other, though they by no means express in words the ideas they intend to communicate. The letter of Frederic, which, though addressed to his agent at Rome, we may consider as designed for the pope himself, displays throughout, both the extraordinary sagacity and the manly resolution which characterized that great prince; while the pope's answer, under the disguise of a disgusting flattery, betrays the most presumptuous and arbitrary designs. Frederic, though his expressions are modified with a courtly dexterity, and with that obsequiousness to the hierarchy in which he was educated, breathes nothing but sincerity, moderation, and peace: whereas Leo X. even in his condescension, is insolent; and by his ridiculous inconsistency in praising the elector, and at the same time adopting violent counsels, demonstrates both the ignorance and the temerity of his advisers. The intelligent reader, who is accustomed to exercise his own understanding on the facts before him, will, by attentively weighing these two letters, see more into the real state of the Reformation and the character of the elector of Saxony and of the Roman court, than by reading many pages of historical speculation and conjecture. But,

Let us now hear the sentiments of one, who neither loved courts, nor practised their arts.—When Luther was informed by Spalatinus, that the prince's agent at Rome

* This was the pope's bull in which Luther was condemned. An account of it and its consequences will be given in the next Chapter.

could transact no business with the pope, because his holiness was offended on account of the protection afforded by the elector to so notorious a heretic, his answer was in substance as follows, and well deserves our notice. “It is entirely agreeable to my wishes, that our illustrious prince should separate himself from my cause as he has hitherto done, and expose me to the public, either to be instructed or convicted of error. Let them punish Sylvester, Eckius, Cajetan and others, who have raised these disturbances in the Church, merely to enhance their own consequence and reputation. Whatever I have done, or now do, I do by compulsion. I am always ready to be quiet, provided they do not insist upon evangelical truth lying dormant. If they will but permit Christians to walk in the path of salvation without persecution, I will give up every thing else; and that spontaneously. This is all I ask. What can be more equitable? I ask not for a cardinal’s hat, nor for gold, nor whatever at this day is deemed precious at Rome.—You will observe, that a mind thus disposed can neither fear threats nor be allured by promises *.”

However, amidst the various distresses which the attacks of persecutors on all sides occasioned, several circumstances took place about the beginning of the year 1520, which tended greatly to encourage the Saxon Reformer. 1. The appearance of Melancthon against the papal advocates has already been mentioned. 2. Several elaborate epistles of Erasmus, written about the same period, to persons of learning and eminence, represent Luther in the most respectful terms. Some of these are already, in substance, before the reader †, who cannot fail to observe, that they must have proved the more serviceable to the cause of the Reformation, because, as Luther himself says, Erasmus, with his usual dexterity, did not seem to take his part, and yet in fact defended him in the very ablest manner ‡. 3. Some German noblemen, who had imbibed Lutheran principles, and had heard of the dangers to which, from the violent machi-

* Lib. I. Epist.

† In pages 445, 446 of this Volume.

‡ Lib. I. Epist. 143.

nations of bigoted Roman-catholics, the Reformer's life was exposed, stepped forward at this crisis, and generously offered him their protection. Among these, in particular is recorded the name of Sylvester Schaumburg, a Franconian knight, who sent his son to Wittemberg, to be instructed by Melancthon; and, at the same time, by a letter, most earnestly requested Luther to accept an asylum in his neighbourhood, where he might be preserved from all harm, by Schaumburg himself and a hundred other noblemen, till the storm was over, and the doctrinal points had undergone a legal examination. Luther had the prudence to transmit to his friend Spalatinus the knight's letter, for the inspection of the elector; and along with it a very significant note, which shows how much his hopes and confidence were improved upon receiving information that he had so many friends in Germany. "If it would not," says he, "give the prince too much trouble, I could wish he would be pleased to give a hint to his friend, cardinal St. George, at Rome, respecting the contents of the inclosed letter from Sir Sylvester Schaumburg, that my enemies may see, they will only make bad worse by driving me from Wittemberg; for there are those, not in Bohemia, but in the middle of Germany, who both can and will protect me against all their ecclesiastical thunders. THERE, most certainly, I should expose the Roman errors and abuses with greater severity than I have thought it prudent to do at Wittemberg, where the authority of the prince and the interests of the university are some restraint to my proceedings. As far as respects myself, the die is cast. Papal wrath and papal favour are equally despised by me. I no longer wish to communicate with the Romanists or to be reconciled to them. Let them condemn me and burn my books; and if, in return, I do not publicly condemn and burn the whole mass of pontifical law, it will be because I cannot find fire. They will not succeed in this contest. The Lord, who knows me to be a most grievous sinner, will, I doubt not, finish his own work, either through me as his instrument, or through another."

It is scarcely necessary to mention, that the Saxon Reformer, when he wrote this note, had made up his mind respecting an accommodation with the court of Rome. In various ways he received almost daily information of their violent proceedings against his doctrines, his writings, and his person*; he soon expected to hear of a cruel and unjust sentence; and it behoved him to make some provision for his safety. Under these circumstances, the generous proposal of protection by Schaumburg and his associates must have been grateful news; and though Divine Providence directed his valuable life to be preserved in a different manner, yet the certain knowledge of having so many powerful friends in the heart of Germany, together with the pleasing option of taking shelter among them in case of emergency, produced a most visible and decisive effect on his mind. We may judge of this by comparing the spirit of the preceding short letter to Spalatinus, with that of the following, which was written to the same friend, just before the kind intentions and voluntary support of the German noblemen were made known to him. Alluding to the bitter accusations of the Romanists, he expresses himself to the following effect: "You know that I have much more right to complain than they. Proofs of this assertion may be found in my little publications; in which I so often own and complain, that I am dragged into this contest by force. How frequently have I proposed peace and silence. Nay, when do I cease to beg for better information? My disposition is still the same; still I am ready to be silent, if I may be permitted to be so; that is, if my enemies shall also be restrained from attacking me. All the world knows that Eckius drew me into the dispute about the pope's supremacy, for no other reason but to injure my person, and all my concerns, and to expose to ridicule both my reputation and our university at Wittemberg. And now, when they see that the man is providentially opposed, they accuse me of vain-glory. How is it, that a person so low and miserable as I am should be suspected of a passion

Critical situation of Luther.

* Du Pin, Book II. Chap. ix.

for glory; I, who ask for nothing more but that I may be suffered to live in private, altogether unknown to the world? Let those, who please, succeed me in my functions; let those, who please, burn my books: What can I say more? However, I desire that one thing may be taken along with what I here say, namely, that if I may not be released from the office of teaching and explaining the word of God, most assuredly I will not be fettered in the discharge of my ministry, I am already sufficiently burdened with my sins; I mean not to add to them the unpardonable crime of remaining in the ministry and of being unfaithful in it, of being guilty of an impious silence, and of the neglect of divine truth and of so many thousand precious souls."

Such appears to have been the pious and truly benevolent determination of the man, whom an elegant historian, with most deplorable prejudice, in direct opposition to the facts, accuses of indulging a spirit of selfish resentment, when he began to oppose the practice of indulgences*.

Whoever reflects on the state of ecclesiastical affairs in the latter part of the year 1520 and the former part of 1521, the important crisis which was fast approaching, the wise and resolute conduct of Martin Luther, and the glorious and happy consequences of his opposition to the reigning corruptions, will look on these authentic documents as extremely interesting, and well deserving the notice of every pious and grateful Protestant. It is indeed much to be lamented, that these, and many other instructive particulars contained in this chapter, have not, as yet, found their way into regular ecclesiastical histories, where they might prove, in some degree, an antidote to the pert and positive assertions of profane and infidel authors, who know no bounds to their misrepresentations of religious characters and religious transactions †.

* Hume, Henry VIII.

† Thus Mr. Hume, besides his odious misrepresentation respecting INDULGENCES, which has long ago received a most complete answer from Dr. Maclaine, in his notes on Mosheim, makes not the least scruple to speak of the Reformation in the following manner:

"Not that reason bore any considerable share, in opening men's eyes with regard to the impostures of the Romish church."

Again, "Many of the reformers adopted an enthusiastic strain of devotion, which admitted of no observances, rites or ceremonies, but placed all merit in a mysterious species of faith, in inward vision, rapture, and ecstasy."

Soon after, he speaks of Leo X. as follows: His "sound JUDGMENT, MODERATION, and TEMPER, were well qualified to retard its progress;" that is, the progress of the sect of reformers.

I will venture to affirm, that it will not be easy to produce, from any writer of tolerable reputation, assertions that have so little foundation in fact as these.

APPENDIX.

WICKLIFF. Page 244.

It is observed in the History, page 259, that the distinguishing tenet of Wickliff was, undoubtedly, the election of Grace. He calls the Church an assembly of predestinated persons. Much more might be produced to the same effect. On some occasions he speaks in such strong terms on this subject, that he has been understood to lean even to the doctrines of absolute necessity and fatalism. The student of ecclesiastical history may be pleased to have some of the evidence relative to this matter, laid before him, that he may have the opportunity of judging for himself.

In our account of the proceedings of the council of Constance, p. 348, it appears that the heretical opinions of Wickliff were digested into forty-five specific articles, and unanimously condemned by that assembly. Two of those articles were, viz.

Article 26. The prayer of the reprobate is of no avail : and,

Article 27. All things happen from absolute necessity.*

The manner in which this great man defended the latter, proves him to have been a deep thinker and a skilful disputant.

Our Lord, says he in his Trialogus, affirmed that such or such an event should come to pass. Its accomplishment, therefore, was unavoidable. The antecedent is necessary ; by parity of argument the consequent is so too. The consequent is not in the power of any created being, forasmuch as the declarations of Christ, and the elections of his mind, are not liable to accidents. And therefore, as it is absolutely certain, and cannot be otherwise but that Christ hath foretold certain events, those events must necessarily come to pass. The same kind of argument will demonstrate every event to be necessary, the future existence of which hath been previously determined by God : and it will make no difference, in whatever manner, or by whatever after-discoveries in time, it may have pleased God to inform us that he had actually determined so, before the creation of the world. If the thing be clearly and necessarily so, namely, that God did predetermine any event, the consequence is inevitable: that event

* L'Enfant.

must take place. Now what can prevent future events from having been predetermined by the Deity? Want of knowledge? inconstancy of will? efficacy of impediments to interrupt his purpose? But with respect to God there is no room for any of these suppositions. Every future event must therefore necessarily take place.*

Wickliff states the above argument, drawn from the prophecies of our Lord, with great triumph. It had puzzled, he said, the very best reasoners; and by its brilliancy had absolutely confounded superficial divines: among whom he reckons the then bishop of Armagh, who owned that he had laboured for twenty years to reconcile the free-will of man with the certain completion of Christ's predictions; and, after all, saw no way of evading the conclusion in favour of necessity, but by allowing that Christ might possibly have been mistaken and have misinformed his Church in regard to future events.

From this and similar passages, it has been concluded that Wickliff was a fatalist. The whole question turns upon the meaning of such expressions as, "*sicut necessario Christus illud asseruit, ita necessario illud eveniet.*" The just interpretation of which, according to Wickliff's ideas, is given, I think, in the translation above. He never meant to say that Christ was not a free agent, but merely that it was absolutely CERTAIN, and could not be otherwise, that Christ HAD MADE such or such declarations. I am confirmed in this opinion by three reasons: —1. From having very diligently considered the passage itself, as it stands in the ninth chapter of the third book of the *Dialogus*. 2. From observing that some of those who have thought differently, have probably never seen the *Dialogus* itself. The book is very scarce, and they do not refer to it, but only to certain extracts from it by Widefort, who was an enemy, and gives them unfairly: And, 3, by attending to Wickliff's sentiments as they are delivered in other parts of that work. In book the second, chapter the fourteenth, he says; "If you ask, what is the real cause of the eternal decrees of God before they are made; the answer is, the WILL OF GOD, or God HIMSELF:" And again, in the tenth chapter of the first book, where the author is treating particularly of the wisdom and power of God, he expressly affirms, that the Divine energy acts with the most perfect freedom, though the effects produced by it must necessarily happen. "*Quantum ad libertatem divinæ potentiæ, patet quod est summè libera, et tamen quicquid facit, necessario eveniet.*"

"That the Supreme Being acts in the most exact conformity to his own decrees, is a truth which Scripture again and again asserts; but that HE was and is absolutely free in decreeing, is no less asserted by the inspired writers; who with one voice declare, that the disposals and appointments of the Almighty do

* Lib. III. Cap. 9. *Dialogus*.

not depend on any antecedent and fatal necessity, but on his own free choice directed by infinite wisdom." If Wickliff could be shown to go farther than this, he ought not, I think, to be defended.

Thomas Netter, commonly called Thomas of Walden, a learned Roman-catholic of the Carmelite order, was one of the greatest adversaries of Wickliff. In his four folio volumes, we find sixty dangerous, heretical articles enumerated against the English reformer. The following are among them: 1. That God gives no good things to his enemies; 2. That God is not more willing to reward the good than to punish the wicked; 3. That all things come to pass by fatal necessity; 4. That God could not make the world otherwise than it is made; 5. That God cannot do any thing which he doth not do; 6. That God cannot bring to pass that something should return into nothing.

In perusing the distinct and pious argumentations of Bradwardine, we every where meet with much entertainment and instruction. Not so in traversing the abstruse, thorny, metaphysical, subtilties of Wickliff and his adversaries. No one need be surprised if some inconsistencies and even contradictions should be found in his writings. We have seen, that in himself he was not a very consistent character, whether we regard his words or his actions. Then his insight into Christian truths was gradual; so that he may be expected not to hold the same language at different periods of his life. There can, however, be no doubt but that he loved Light and Truth; and the real wonder is, that in his circumstances, he attained so much of them. Lastly, his writings have come down to us very imperfect; many of them are entirely lost, and we are obliged to take the accounts of his enemies. With no little need for patience, I have examined Walden's evidence against him respecting the fatalism contained in the third, fourth, and fifth articles above mentioned; and am convinced that he misrepresents the sentiments of the excellent man, whom he so much disliked. Wickliff, on several occasions, for argument sake, appears to grant that there would be a contradiction in supposing any thing to be producible, which God does not actually produce; but in one place he expressly informs us, that it was an usual thing with him to guard concessions of that sort by limiting them in such a manner that they should be no restraint on the Divine Will; every thing, according to him, is producible, WHICH GOD PLEASES TO PRODUCE. I know very well, says Wickliff, that in pretending to treat of the wisdom and power of God, I am plunging into an ocean of difficulties, where I may be apt to prate concerning many things, without having a good foundation for what I say. I know that it is a very hard matter to preserve the due course, especially as on many points I think differently from what I formerly did. However, as I was then ready to own my error, so I trust I always

shall be, whenever I am shown that I have advanced any thing contrary to truth.*

If Thomas of Walden had properly attended to this candid concession, and honest protestation, that are to be found at a very little distance from the passages which he thought so objectionable, he would probably have treated Wickliff with less severity.

I cannot dismiss this head in better terms than those of a very useful memorialist,† who speaks of Wickliff, in substance as follows :

“ I intend neither to deny, dissemble, defend, nor excuse any of his faults. We have this treasure, says the apostle, in EARTHEN vessels ; and he that shall endeavour to prove a pitcher of clay to be a pot of gold, will take great pains to small purpose. Yea, should I be over officious to retain myself to plead for Wickliff’s faults, that glorious Saint would sooner chide than thank me. He was a man, and so, subject to error ; he lived in a dark age, and was vexed with opposition ; and it is therefore unreasonable that the constitution of his positive opinions should be GUESSED by his polemical heat, when he was chafed in disputation. Besides, envy has falsely fathered many foul aspersions upon him. What a pity it is that we have not his works, to hear him speak in his own behalf ! Were they all extant, we might know the occasion, intention, and connexion of what he spake, together with the limitations, restrictions, distinctions, and qualifications of what he maintained. There we might see what was overplus of passion, and what the just measure of his judgment. Many phrases, heretical in sound, would appear orthodox in sense. Some of his poisonous passages, dressed with due caution, would prove wholesome, and even cordial truths : Many of his expressions wanting, not GRANUM PONDERIS, but SALIS ; no weight of truth, but some grains of discretion. But alas ! two hundred of his books are burnt ; and we are fain to borrow the bare titles of them from his adversaries, who have winnowed his works, as Satan did Peter, not to find CORN, but CHAFF.”

SICKNESS OF WICKLIFF.

The prodigious exertions of Wickliff, and the harassing persecutions he underwent in 1378, are said to have been the occasion of a dangerous fit of sickness, which brought him almost to the point of death in the beginning of the year 1379. The mendicant friars hearing of this, immediately selected a committee of grave doctors, and instructed them in what they were to say to the sick man who had so grievously offended them. And, that the message might be the more solemn, they joined with them four of the most respectable citizens, whom they termed Aldermen of the Wards. These commissioners found Wickliff lying in his

* Lib. I. Cap. 10. & III. C. 8.

† Fuller.

bed; and they are said first of all to have wished him health, and a recovery from his distemper. After some time they put him in mind of the many and great injuries which he had done to the begging friars by his sermons and writings, and exhorted him, that as he had now very little time to live, he would, like a true penitent, bewail and revoke, in their presence, whatever things he had said to their disparagement. But Dr. Wickliff, immediately recovering strength, called his servants to him, and ordered them to raise him a little on his pillows. Which, when they had done, he said with a loud voice, "I SHALL NOT DIE, BUT LIVE AND DECLARE THE EVIL DEEDS OF THE FRIARS." On which the doctors, and the other deputies, departed from him in no little confusion.*

ANECDOTES RELATIVE TO WICKLIFF.

S. Sudbury, archbishop of Canterbury, was murdered in the insurrection by Wat Tyler; and was succeeded in the primacy by William Courtney,† who had always shown himself one of Wickliff's most active adversaries. The new archbishop highly approved of the proceedings of the university of Oxford, mentioned in page 262; and he determined to use all the authority of his high office to crush Wickliff and his followers. He was not duly invested with the consecrated pall from Rome, till the sixth of May 1382; and on the seventeenth of the same month he called together a court of select bishops and doctors.

The memorandum‡ in the archbishop's register states, that the court having met in the monastery of the friars preachers, certain Conclusions repugnant to the determinations of the church were laid before them; and that after good deliberation they met again, and pronounced ten of the Conclusions heretical, and fourteen erroneous and repugnant to the church.

It does not appear by the records, that Wickliff himself was cited to appear before the archbishop; only the names of a few persons who espoused his opinions are mentioned. Wickliff is said to have claimed the privilege of being exempted from episcopal jurisdiction, on the ground of being a member of the university, and holding an office therein.

There cannot be the smallest doubt but that these proceedings were levelled chiefly at the obnoxious Reformer. But till with my own eyes I read the seventh heretical article in the page above referred to in Wilkins's Concilia, I could scarce believe it possible that one of the charges against either Wickliff or his followers, should be, *Deus debet obedire diabolo*, "God ought to obey the devil." This single fact shows to what a length calumny and credulity may go, when men are heated by passion and prejudice.

* Bale, Appendix, p. 469.

† A. D. 1381.

‡ Wilkins, Vol. III. p. 157.

However, such violence and misrepresentation served but in the end to promote the cause of truth. Wickliff defended his opinions with spirit, took particular notice of this charge, and gained many new friends. "Such things," says he, "do they invent of catholic men, that they may blacken their reputation, as if they held this impious opinion, that God is a devil; or any other open heretical tenet; and they are prepared by false and slanderous witnesses to fix such heresies on good men, as if they had invented them."*

An extraordinary, but well-authenticated circumstance, proves the ability and address of Courtney. At the instant when the extracts from the writings of Wickliff were produced, and the court was going to enter upon business on the seventeenth of May, a violent earthquake shook the monastery. The affrighted bishops and doctors threw down their papers, and cried out, "the business is displeasing to God." The firm and intrepid archbishop, coolly and quietly chid their superstitious fears; and with great promptitude gave the matter a different turn: "If this earthquake," said he, "means any thing, it portends the downfall of heresy. For as noxious vapours are confined in the bowels of the earth, and are expelled by these violent concussions, so through our strenuous endeavours the kingdom must be purified from the pestilential opinions of reprobate men. But this is not to be done without great commotion."†

Wickliff in his writings often alluded to this accident, calling it the council of the herydene, which is the old English word for earthquake.

When the archbishop and his court had condemned Wickliff's doctrines, and had finished the business for which they had met together, a sermon was preached at the church of the grey friars, by John Cunningham, a distinguished adversary of Wickliff. At this sermon we are told there was present, among others, a knight, named Cornelius Cloune, who was a great favourer of the Conclusions then condemned, and one of those who held and taught them; nor would he believe otherwise of the sacrament than that real and true bread was present, according to Wickliff's opinion.

The next day, being the Vigil of the Holy Trinity, the knight went to the same convent to hear mass. Behold! at the breaking of the Host, upon casting his eye towards the friar who happened to celebrate mass, he saw in his hands, very flesh, raw and bloody, and divided into three parts. Full of wonder and amazement, he called his squire, that he might see it; but the squire saw nothing more than usual. Moreover, in the middle of the third piece, which was to be put into the chalice, the knight saw this name, JESUS, written in letters of flesh, all raw and bloody; which was very wonderful to behold. On the next day,

* MS. Bodl.

† MS. Bodl. and Chron. Mon. Alban.

namely, the feast of the Holy Trinity, the same friar, preaching at Paul's Cross, told this story to all the people, and the knight attested the truth of it, and promised that he would fight and die in that cause; for that in the sacrament of the altar there was the very body of Christ, and not bread only, as he had formerly believed.*

Such were the artifices of those, who at that time zealously defended the popish doctrines.

I have taken much pains to reconcile the inconsistencies and obscurities which are to be found in the accounts of the latter part of Wickliff's life. Even in consulting such authorities as Spelman and Wilkins, I find erroneous and contradictory dates of one of the most material original records. I believe the following brief account does not differ essentially from the truth.

In the former part of the summer of 1381, Dr. Barton, the vice-chancellor, or chancellor, as he is called in the instrument of the university of Oxford, appeared in the public schools while Dr. Wickliff was sitting in the chair; and with the unanimous consent of twelve doctors, his assessors, pronounced the professor's doctrines respecting the sacrament, heretical.

Wickliff, upon the first hearing of this sentence, is said to have been put to some confusion; but he soon recovered himself, and told the vice-chancellor, that neither he nor his assistants could confute the opinions they had ventured to condemn.

From this sentence the professor appealed to King Richard; but the Duke of Lancaster, who in the manuscripts is styled a wise counsellor and a faithful son of the sacred church, came expressly to Oxford, and, as is hinted in p. 255 of this Volume, ordered Wickliff to harangue no more on that subject.† But he did not choose to obey.

At length, Courtney, a more active and determined primate than his predecessor Sudbury, finding that neither the strong measures which had been taken at Oxford, nor his own subsequent proceedings at the Earthquake-council, availed to the silencing of the audacious heretic, devised the following expedients, which enabled him at least to rid the university of the man whose person had hitherto been sheltered under academical immunities.

1. He obtained the king's patent, empowering the archbishop and his suffragans to arrest and imprison all persons who privately or publicly should maintain the heresies in question.

2. He also obtained the king's patent, directed to the chancellor and proctors at Oxford, appointing them Inquisitors-general, and ordering them to banish and expel from the university and town of Oxford all who were advocates of Wickliff's heresies, and even all who should dare to receive into their inns

* Knyghton de Event. Angl. 2651.

† Wilkins, Vol. III. p. 171.

or houses Wickliff himself, or any other of his friends, suspected of the like.*

From this storm Wickliff thought proper to retire, and the haughty archbishop had the satisfaction of seeing the man he so much disliked, compelled to retreat before his power, to Lutterworth, an obscure part of the kingdom.

DEATH OF WICKLIFF. Page 258.

I have followed Mosheim in the history, who says that this event took place in the year 1387. On more accurate inquiry, I find that soon after his removal to his parsonage, he was seized with the palsy, from which, however, he recovered so as to resume his studies and pastoral exertions. It was, I believe, on the 28th of December 1384, when he was attending divine service, in his church at Lutterworth, that he was attacked by a second and fatal stroke of the palsy. His tongue, in particular, was so much affected, that he never spoke again.

The bigoted papists gloried in his death; and one of them has insulted his memory unmercifully: "It was reported," says Walsingham, "that he had prepared accusations and blasphemies, which he had intended, on the day he was taken ill, to have uttered in his pulpit against Thomas à Becket, the saint and martyr of the day; but by the judgment of God he was suddenly struck, and the palsy seized his limbs; and that mouth, which was to have spoken huge things against God, and his Saint, and the holy Church, was miserably drawn aside, and afforded a frightful spectacle to the beholders. His tongue was speechless, and his head shook, showing plainly that the curse of God was upon him."†

The reader will be beforehand with me in any remarks I could make on this account.

It was in the year 1415 that the council of Constance declared that Wickliff had died an obstinate heretic; and ordered his bones, if they could be distinguished from the bones of the faithful, to be dug up and thrown upon a dunghill. This sentence was not executed till thirteen years after, when orders for that purpose were sent by Pope Martin V. to R. Fleming, bishop of Lincoln and diocesan of Lutterworth. Accordingly, the bishop's officers took the bones out of the grave, where they had lain undisturbed forty-four years, burnt them, and cast the remaining ashes into an adjoining brook.‡

Among the forty-five articles of Wickliff's doctrines § condemned at Constance in 1415, I observe the sixth to be the very

* Wilkins, Vol. III. p. 156 and 166.

† The Tinmouth Chronicle and Walsingham say, that it was the day after, 29th December, being the Feast of St. Thomas à Becket, whom the Romish church style a saint and a martyr.

‡ L'Enfant, 231.—Fuller, 171.

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same with that which stands the seventh among those pronounced heretical by Courtney and his council in 1382: "God ought to obey the devil." I have allowed in general that the council of Constance did not misrepresent the opinions of Wickliff. But this article certainly ought to be excepted; and a diligent examination, were it worth while, might probably discover others in the same predicament.

TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE. Page 257.

Wickliff, in one place, defines the CHURCH to be the congregation of just men for whom Christ shed his blood. And in others he speaks thus: "Scripture is the faith of the Church, and the more it is known in an orthodox sense, the better; therefore as secular men ought to know the faith, the Divine word is to be taught them in whatever language is best known to them. The truth of the faith is clearer and more exact in the Scripture, than the priests know how to express it; and if one may say so, there are many prelates who are ignorant of Scripture, and others who conceal things contained in it. It seems useful therefore that the faithful should themselves search and discover the sense of the faith, by having the Scriptures in a language which they know and understand. Christ and his apostles converted men, by making known to them the Scriptures in that language which was familiar to them. Why then ought not the modern disciples of Christ to collect fragments from the loaf; and, as they did, clearly open the Scriptures to the people, that they may know them? The apostle teaches, that we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, and be answerable for all the goods intrusted to us; it is necessary therefore the faithful should know these goods and the use of them, that they may give a proper answer. For the answer by a prelate or an attorney will not THEN avail, but every one MUST answer in his own person."*

In this manner did our zealous Reformer argue for the propriety of a translation of the Bible into the English language.

In his prologue to the translation, he informs us of the method in which he proceeded, notwithstanding the opposition he met with, and the clamours that were raised against him on the account. 1. He, with several who assisted him, got together all the Latin Bibles they could, which they diligently collated and corrected, in order that they might have one Latin Bible near the truth. In the next place, they collected the ordinary comments, with which they studied the text so as to make themselves masters of its sense and meaning. Lastly, they consulted the old grammarians and ancient divines, respecting the hard words and sentences. After all this was done, Wickliff then set about the translation, which he resolved, should NOT be a literal one, but so as to express the meaning as clearly as he could.

* Great Sentence.—Spec. Secul.—Doctr. Christ.

A specimen or two of Wickliff's New Testament, in the old English of his time, may not be displeasing to the reader.

Matt. xi. 25, 26. "In thilke tyme Jhesus answeride & seid, I knowleche to thee, Fadir, Lord of Hevene & of earthe, for thou hast hid these thingis fro wise men and redy, and hast schewid hem to litil children. So, Fadir; for so it was plesynge to fore thee."

John x. 26—30. "Ye beleven not, for ye ben not of my scheep. My scheep heren my vois, and I knowe hem, and thei suen me. And I gyve to hem everlastynge life, & thei schulen not perische, withouten end; & noon schal rauysche hem fro myn hond. That thing that my Fadir gaf to me, is more than alle thingis: & no man may rauysche from my Fadrис hond. I & the Fadir ben oon."

Rom. ix. 12. "It was seid to him, that the more schulde serve the lesse: as it is writun, I louyde Jacob, but I hatide Esau. What therfore schulen we seie? wher wickidnesse be anentis God? God forbede. For he seith to Moises, I schal have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I schal ghyve mercy on whom I have mercy. Therefore, it is not neither of man willynge, neither rennynge; but of God hauynge mercy. And the Scripture seith to Farao, For to this thing have I styrrid thee, that I schewe in thee my vertu, and that my name be teeld in al erthe. Therefore, of whom God wole, he hath mercy: & whom he wole, he endureth. Thanne seith thou to me, what is sought ghit, for who withstondith his will? Oo man, what art thou that answerist to God! Wher a maad thing seith to him that made it, What hast thou maad me so? Wher a pottere of cley hath not power to make, of the same gobet, oo vessel into onour, a nothir into dispyt!"*

LOLLARDS. Pages 320, 321.

In the above pages are briefly mentioned the grievous persecutions by bishop Langland or Longland. Mr. Collier, in his Ecclesiastical History, after allowing that several abjured, and that six actually suffered, observes, that these men were accused for reading the New Testament in English; and why, says he, was this so great a crime? Because it was WICKLIFF's translation, and condemned by the church. The English clergy did not believe this translator had reached the original, and rightly expressed the mind of the Holy Ghost. . . . They were careful to prevent the spreading of Lollardism, and we need not wonder.—Collier, vol. ii. p. 11.

It is quite painful to see so valuable a writer undertake to

* N.B.—This being a passage frequently quoted in controversy, it is supposed, that very particular pains were taken with it by the translator.

speak thus in mitigation of the abominable cruelties of the papists in those times.

Further; he does not believe that "six men and a woman were burnt at Coventry, for teaching their children the Lord's prayer, the ten commandments, and the creed in the vulgar tongue;" and he expresses a hope that Bishop Burnet, who mentions the fact in his History of the Reformation, was misinformed. "The learned historian," says he, "cites Fox for his authority. But this looks like a lame story, for Fox cites no other authority than one Mother Hall."—Collier, *ibid.*

On reading the above, I was curious to see what Fox actually DOES SAY: and here I shall transcribe his very words, without making any observation on them. "The WITNESSES of this history," says he, "be yet alive, which both SAW THEM and KNEW THEM. OF WHOM ONE is Mother Hall, dwelling NOW in Baginton, two miles from Coventry. By whom also this is testified of them, that they above all other in Coventry pretended most show and worship of devotion at the holding up of the sacrament; whether to colour the matter or no, it is not known."—Fox, vol. ii. p. 182.

Mr. Fox speaks of the zeal of the holy men in those times of persecution in the most glowing terms: "To see their travails, their earnest seeking, their burning zeal, their readings, watchings, their sweet assemblies, their love and concord, their godly living, their faithful marrying with the faithful, may make us now in these our days of free profession to blush for shame."—Fox, vol. ii. p. 23.

COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE. Pages 326—389.

JOHN HUSS, AND JEROM OF PRAGUE.

Learned men of a speculative turn, and of the most impartial and dispassionate temper, have been puzzled to account for the treatment these good men met with from the council of Constance. Jerom suffered as an associate and supporter of Huss; and in regard to the latter, the sentence of the council is express, that he was a notorious, scandalous, obstinate, incorrigible heretic. L'Enfant, after a most careful and judicious review of all the circumstances relative to this sentence, is decidedly of opinion that the accusers failed in making out their charges, and that the council therefore were not justified in passing so severe and cruel a sentence. There is no doubt that both Huss and Jerom were victims to the rage and injustice of their unrelenting enemies. But still, in public transactions, even the most abandoned of mankind do not usually lay aside all regard to principles or to the judgment of others.

Several motives, not openly avowed by the council, have been

supposed to influence their minds in the condemnation of John Huss:

1. He always refused to subscribe to the condemnation of Wickliff; and, on many occasions, he had spoken of him as of a holy man. And though he did not agree with the English reformer respecting the eucharist, he appears to have been a thorough Wickliffite in all those matters which related to the prevailing abuses of ecclesiastical power. Hence it is easy to understand how obnoxious he must have been to corrupt pontiffs and cardinals; and in general, to ambitious and domineering dignitaries of the established hierarchy. L'Enfant speaks out, when he says, "the SOUNDEST part of the council of Constance were not materially different from so many Wickliffites and Hussites." The sound part, however, it is to be feared, was but a small part of the whole; and every one must see that by far the greater part of that assembly would concur in thinking it high time to silence a man who was continually exclaiming against the tyranny and irregularities of the clergy.

2. John Huss, by his sermons, his writings, and his conversation, had CERTAINLY contributed to render the clergy of Bohemia odious and contemptible in the eyes of the people. The bishops, therefore, together with the sacerdotal and monastic orders, were sensible that their honours and advantages, their credit and authority, would be in the greatest danger, if this zealous Reformer should be allowed to return into his own country, and declaim with his usual freedom. The true cause of the commotions, which existed in Bohemia, is allowed by all the authors of that time, without a single exception, to have been the scandalous conduct of the popes, the subversion of discipline, and the entire corruption of the whole ecclesiastical state. A complete reformation, therefore, was the only adequate remedy. But this, as the event proved, was not to be expected from a corrupt hierarchy. It was far more probable that the indignant interested ecclesiastics should unite to accomplish the ruin of the man who exposed their ambition, tyranny, and avarice. For this very purpose, we are told, the wicked clergy of Bohemia and Moravia, and especially the bishops and abbots, combined together; and even contributed sums of money to be employed in procuring the condemnation and death of Huss; and all this, because they could not bear his faithful honest advice and admonition, and because he detected their abominable pride, simony, avarice, and debauchery.*

3. That some persons of the greatest weight in the council were actually influenced by these motives, is not a matter of mere conjecture. L'Enfant has given us the very words, in Latin, spoken by the Emperor to the council, after the examination of Huss. The translation of them is as follows:

* L'Enfant.—Mosheim.—Diar. Hussit.

"You have heard the articles laid to the charge of John Huss. They are grievous, numerous, and proved not only by credible witnesses, but by his own confession. In my opinion, there's not a single one among them which does not call for the punishment of fire. If therefore he do not retract all, I am for having him burnt. And even though he should obey the council, I am of opinion, that he should be forbid to preach, and instruct, or ever to set foot again in the kingdom of Bohemia. For if he be suffered to preach, and especially in Bohemia, where he has a strong party, he will not fail to return to his natural bent, and even to sow new errors worse than the former. Moreover, I am of opinion, that the condemnation of his errors in Bohemia ought to be sent to my brother the king of Bohemia, to Poland, and to other countries where this doctrine prevails, with orders to cause all those who shall continue to believe and teach it, to be punished by the Ecclesiastical authority, and by the secular arm jointly. There is no remedy for this evil, but by thus cutting the branches as well as pulling up the root. Moreover, it is absolutely necessary that the bishops and other prelates, who have laboured here for the extirpation of this heresy, be recommended by the suffrages of the whole council to their sovereigns. Lastly, says the Emperor, if there are any of John Huss's friends here at Constance, they ought to be restrained with all due severity, but especially his disciple Jerom." Whereupon, some said, that Jerom of Prague might perhaps be brought to reason by the punishment of his MASTER.

This lays open the true reason of that treatment, p. 361, which Huss was to have experienced in case he had retracted. The council dreaded his return in Bohemia. Even in the iniquitous sentence which they passed against him, they had the incautious effrontery to declare John Huss not a true preacher of the Gospel of Christ, according to the exposition of holy doctors, but rather one who in his public discourses seduced the Christian people of Bohemia BY HIS COMPILATIONS from the SCRIPTURES.*

4. It is a lamentable truth, that in those days the disputes concerning the most abstract metaphysical subtilties were carried to such a height by the contending parties, as to produce the greatest bitterness and animosity. Huss was attached to the party of the REALISTS, as they were then called; and opposed with great warmth his adversaries the NOMINALISTS. This circumstance is supposed to have contributed not a little to the unhappy fate of this pious Bohemian. For the tribunal at Constance was principally composed of Nominalists, with the famous John Gerson at their head, who was the zealous patron of the faction, and the mortal enemy of Huss. In the report which the popish writers sent to the king of France, respecting the transactions at Constance, there is the following passage:

* Vid. Fascicul. rer. Sententia defin. contra Huss. p. 302.

“ God raised up the Catholic doctors Peter Allyaco and John Gerson, and many other learned NOMINALISTS, who disputed, during forty days at the council of Constance, with the heretics Jerom and John Huss, and vanquished them.”*

Happy would it have been if these opposite sects of philosophers had confined themselves within the bounds of reason and argument, or even of mutual invectives; but they were accustomed to accuse each other of heresy and impiety, and had constantly recourse to penal laws and corporal punishments. Thus the leading NOMINALISTS at Constance looked on themselves as personally offended with Huss, and would be satisfied with nothing short of the death of their powerful adversary. On the other hand, in 1479, the Realists had sufficient weight and influence to procure the condemnation of John de Wesalia, a Nominalist, of whose sufferings we have already given a brief account.†

It is needless to detain the reader with a minute detail of the distinctions between the Realists and Nominalists. Their principal point of contention seems to have been, the existence or non-existence of abstract or universal ideas. Strange infatuation! That a difference of opinion on such abstruse and obscure subjects as these should ever have been supposed to amount to the sin against the Holy Ghost, or to a mortal offence against God, the Christian religion, justice, and the commonwealth. “ Can this blindness proceed from any other cause than the influence of Satan, who diverts us from good things, and makes us apply to vain speculations, which neither inspire us with devotion towards God, nor with love and charity towards our neighbour.”—Such is the fine reflection of the anonymous author of the Examination of John de Wesalia.‡

The angry disputations of these discordant sects continued till the appearance of Luther, who, by introducing more important subjects, soon put an end to the mutual wranglings of the scholastic divines.

There is a tradition, that John Huss, alluding to his own name, which signifies a Goose, predicted before his judges, the Reformation by Luther, in the following terms: “ This day ye roast a Goose; but a hundred years hence a white Swan will come, which ye will never be able to put to death.” This pretended prophecy, like many others, was probably made after the event.

L'Enfant mentions several medals which appear to have been struck for the purpose of commemorating the virtues of Huss. Two were preserved at Magdeburg, which have on one side the image of John Huss, with his beard and mitre, with a book in his right hand, which Luther, in a priest's habit, bare-headed and clasping the Bible with both hands, looks on with pleasure.

* Baluz. Miscell. Tom. IV. p. 534.

† See pages 401, 402.

‡ Fascicul. rer. exp.

A third was in the private cabinet of a German Count. On one side it represents Huss, with these words, *Sola Deo acceptos nos facit esse fides*—Faith alone renders us acceptable to God; and on the other side Luther, with these words, *Pestis eram, vivus; moriens ero mors tua, Papa*—I was a plague to thee, O Pope, whilst living, and will be thy death when I die.

The encomium passed by the same very impartial historian, on the private letters of Huss, is well worthy of notice: "There is not a papist nor a protestant, I will venture to say, not a Turk, nor a pagan, who, notwithstanding the hasty expressions dropped now and then in his letters, does not admire them for the dignity and piety of his sentiments, the tenderness of his conscience, his charity towards his enemies, his affection and fidelity to his friends, his gratitude to his benefactors, and above all his constancy of mind, accompanied with the most extraordinary modesty and humility."

After all, a very learned and profound ecclesiastical historian, admits that there did appear in the conduct of HUSS, ONE MARK OF HERESY, which, according to the maxims of the age, might expose him to condemnation with some appearance of justice; namely, HIS INFLEXIBLE OBSTINACY; which the church of Rome always considered as a grievous heresy, even in those whose errors were of little moment.* Huss refused to abjure his errors; and in so doing, he resisted that council which was supposed to represent the catholic church. Moreover, he intimated with sufficient plainness that the church was fallible. All this was certainly highly criminal and intolerably heretical. For it became a dutiful son of the church to submit, without any exception, his own judgment to the judgment of his holy mother, and to believe firmly in her infallibility. The Roman church for many years had observed the rule of Pliny:† "In case of obstinate perseverance I ordered them to be executed. For this I had no doubt, that a sullen and obstinate inflexibility called for the vengeance of the magistrate." The discerning reader will determine for himself, how far Dr. Mosheim, in making these observations, is to be considered as speaking ironically.

LUTHER. Pages 418—447.

Though this chapter contains the most material circumstances relative to the earlier part of Luther's life, the reader may not be displeased to peruse the following passages, the substance of which is taken from the preface to the second volume of Luther's Works. This preface is sometimes called the Life of Luther, and is particularly valuable, because it was written by the pious

* Mosh. *Historia Eccl.* p. 616. Not. (a).

† See Vol. I. page 128 of this History.

Melancthon, after Luther's decease, and because it is wanting in some of the copies of the Wittenberg Latin editions.*—The excellent writer begins thus :

“The Rev. Martin Luther had given reason to hope that in the preface to this part of his writings, he would favour us with some account of his own life, and of the occasions of those contests in which he was so much concerned. And no doubt he would have done so, if before this volume was printed, he had not been called from the present mortal life, to the eternal enjoyment of God, and the heavenly church. A luminous review of his private life would have been peculiarly useful : the narrative must have been full of lessons for the admonition of posterity, and also full of examples for the encouragement of piety : moreover it would have confuted the slanderous fictions of his enemies ; who insinuate, that he was stirred up by princes or others to undermine the dignity of bishops, or that he was induced, through the violence of private ambition, to break the bonds of monastic slavery.

“It were much to be wished that such a narrative had been executed by himself with a copiousness of detail. For though the malevolent might have objected, that the author was trumpeting his own praise, we know very well, that he was too grave a character to have allowed the smallest deviation from truth. Besides, as many good and wise men are yet alive, who, he must have known, were well acquainted with all the transactions,—to have devised falsehoods under such circumstances must have been perfectly ridiculous.

“I now proceed to recite, with the strictest regard to truth, such matters relative to his life, as I either actually saw, or was told of by himself.

“The parents of Luther took especial care in their daily instructions, to educate their son in the knowledge and fear of God, and in a sense of his duty. The youth soon displayed very great talents, and particularly in an inclination to eloquence. With great ease he surpassed his school-fellows in copiousness of language, both in prose and verse ; and if he had been so fortunate as to have met with suitable teachers, his great capacity would have enabled him to go through all the sciences. Neither is it improbable but the milder studies of a sound philosophy, and a careful habit of elaborate composition, might have been useful in moderating the vehemence of his natural temper : but at Erfurt he was introduced to the dry, thorny logic of the age ; and his penetrating genius quickly made him master of all that was valuable in that subject.

“His capacious mind eager for knowledge, was not content with this. He proceeded to Cicero, Virgil, Livy, and the rest. Nor did he read these authors, as boys do, for the sake of the

*It has been published separately ; but it is not easy to be met with.

words, but for the instruction they furnish. He entered into the spirit of the writers; and as his memory was in an extraordinary degree tenacious, almost every thing he had read, was at hand for practice. Hence the superior genius of Luther became the admiration of the whole university.

“His parents had intended these great powers of eloquence, and this vast strength of genius, to be employed in public business for the advantage of the state; but Luther, contrary to their judgment, suddenly left the study of the law, and entered the Augustine monastery at Erfurt. There he not only gave the closest attention to ecclesiastical learning, but also personally submitted to the severest discipline. He far exceeded every one in all kinds of religious exercises, in reading, in arguing, in fasting, in praying. And as he was neither a little, nor a weak man, I have often been astonished to observe how little meat or drink he seemed to require. I have seen him, when he was in perfect health, absolutely neither eat nor drink during four days together; at other times, I have seen him for many days be content with the slight allowance of a very little bread and a herring on each day.

“The immediate occasion of his commencing that course of life which he judged most adapted to sacred duties and the promotion of piety, was this, as he himself told me, and as many persons well know. While he was deeply reflecting on the astonishing instances of the Divine vengeance, so great alarm would suddenly affect his whole frame, as almost to frighten him to death. I was once present, when, through intense exertion of mind in the course of an argument respecting some point of doctrine, he was so terrified, as to retire to a neighbour's chamber, place himself on the bed, and pray aloud, frequently repeating these words, ‘He hath concluded all under sin, that he might have mercy upon all.’ These alarming agitations came upon him either for the first time, or, certainly, they were the severest in that year, when he lost an intimate companion, who was killed; but I know not by what accident.

“It was not, therefore, poverty, but the love of a pious life, which induced Luther to enter the monastery. And as this was his grand object, he was not content with the usual scholastic learning, though his proficiency in it was surprising. He was not in quest of fame, but of religious improvement. He soon comprehended the subtle processes of the schools, but his heart was not in those things. The fountain of SACRED AND HEAVENLY LEARNING, that is, the writings of the prophets and the apostles, were more suited to his taste; and these he studied with the greatest avidity. The anxieties and terrors above mentioned had increased this turn of mind. He wished to know the WILL OF GOD, to build his faith on the firmest foundations, and to cultivate an habitual reverence for the Divine commands.

“ He used to say, that an elderly priest in the monastery, to whom he had opened the distresses of his conscience, had been of great use to him, by his discourses on the nature of faith, and by drawing his attention to that expression in the creed, ‘ I believe in the remission of Sins.’ The elderly priest interpreted this article as implying not merely a GENERAL BELIEF, for the devils had a faith of that sort, but, that it was the command of God that each particular person should apply this doctrine of the remission of sins to his own particular case : and this interpretation, he said, was confirmed by a reference to a passage of St. Bernard, in one of his sermons, who maintains the same sentiment, and also produces the apostle Paul in support of the doctrine of free justification by faith.

“ This conversation proved a great comfort to the mind of Luther. He was led to attend to St. Paul’s doctrine of justification by faith, which is so often inculcated by that apostle. By reading and comparing together different parts of the Old and New Testament, and by an increased dependence on God in daily prayer, he gradually acquired more light, and saw the emptiness of the usual interpretations of Scripture.

“ He then began to read the works of Augustine, where he found many decisive passages which confirmed his idea of faith, and gave him much satisfaction. He read other divines, but stuck close to Augustine.

“ Frederic, the elector of Saxony, heard him preach ; and much admired the excellent matter of his sermons, as well as the nervous language and genius of the preacher.*

“ Afterwards, Luther undertook to expound the Psalms and the Epistle to the Romans. He showed the difference between the Law and the Gospel : he refuted the ancient pharisaical error, at that time prevalent both in the schools and the pulpit, that men by their own works may merit the remission of their sins, and be accounted righteous before God. Thus he recalled men’s minds to the office of the Son of God, and, like John the Baptist, showed them the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. Moreover, he taught them, that remission of their sins is freely for Christ’s sake, and that this benefit is to be received by faith.

“ This revival of most excellent doctrine procured him a great and extensive authority ; especially as the LIFE of the man harmonized with his professions. His language was not merely that of the lips, but proceeded from the heart. The proverb was remarkably verified in this case—‘ The pious conduct of a man maketh his speech persuasive.’ It was this circumstance, namely, the sanctity of his life, that induced some excellent characters to comply with the plans which he afterwards proposed, of changing certain established ceremonies.

“ Not that Luther, at this time, meditated the smallest innovation on the customary observances. On the contrary, he was a most rigid disciplinarian; and had broached nothing to alarm. But he was illustrating more and more those doctrines of which ALL stand in need, the doctrines of repentance, remission of sins, faith, and the true consolations of the cross. Pious Christians were delighted with these things; and even learned men were much pleased to see Christ, the prophets, and the apostles, brought, as it were, out of darkness and prison; and to hear of the difference between law and gospel and their promises, and between philosophy and the word of God, concerning which important matters, not a line was to be found in Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and such like. Add to this, the writings of Erasmus proved great incitements to the cultivation of the Greek and Latin languages. Luther himself diligently studied Hebrew and Greek, for the purpose of obtaining a more perfect knowledge of the Scriptures.

“ Such were the employments of Luther at the time when those prostitute indulgences were first proclaimed by that most impudent Dominican, Tetzel. Burning with the love of every thing that was godly, and irritated by Tetzel’s shameful discourses, he published some propositions concerning the nature of indulgences. The Dominican, in return, publicly burnt Luther’s propositions, and menaced the heretic himself with the flames. In a word, the outrageous conduct of Tetzel and his associates absolutely compelled Luther to discuss the subject at length, in support of the cause of Truth.

“ In this manner began the controversy between the Reformers and the Papists. As yet Luther never dreamt of changing any one of the rites of the church, nor even of entirely rejecting indulgences. They, therefore, charge him falsely, who say that he made use of the affair of the indulgences as a plausible pretext for subverting the establishment, or for increasing either his own power or that of others.

“ Frederic of Saxony, in particular, conducted himself agreeably to the known character of that prince. He neither incited nor applauded Luther; he was ever distinguished as a lover of peace; and it was with a painful concern that he beheld the prospect of still greater dissensions.

“ But he was a wise man, and was influenced not merely by worldly maxims, which always direct us to crush as quickly as possible the slightest beginnings of every innovation: he revered the DIVINE commands, which enjoin attention to the Gospel, and forbid an obstinate resistance to the Truth. Thus this prince submitted to God, read his word with diligence, and never discouraged whatever his judgment pointed out to him as sound doctrine. Moreover, I know that he often asked wise and learned men to give him their sentiments freely on the disputed

points; and in particular at Cologne he besought Erasmus to open his mind to him respecting the controversies in which Luther was engaged. There Erasmus spoke without disguise: 'The man is right; but there is a want of mildness in him.'*

"On this head Duke Frederic afterwards wrote to Luther, and exhorted him, in the most serious manner, to moderate the asperity of his style.

"It is also well known that Luther promised Cardinal Cajetan to be silent, provided his adversaries were also enjoined silence. From which it most clearly appears that he had, at that time, formed no purpose of raising contests in the church, but wished for peace; till ignorant writers provoked him on all sides, and drew him into fresh disputes.

"The grand question concerning the supremacy of the Roman See was raised by Eckius for the purpose of inflaming the hatred of the pope and of princes against Luther.

"Our Reformer, not only in the beginning of the contest, undertook the cause of Truth, without the least motive of private ambition, but also remained throughout the course of it, always mindful of his own peculiar department; so that though he was naturally of an ardent and passionate temper, yet he constantly disclaimed the use of force, or of any other arms but those of argument and instruction. He wisely distinguished between things that were totally different in every way; for example, the duties of a bishop instructing the Church of God, and of a magistrate holding the sword as a restraint on the licentious multitude.

"Accordingly when Satan, who loves to disgrace religion by the ruinous errors of poor miserable men, raised up several seditious characters to excite tumults and irregularities, Luther was ever the man to condemn such outrages in the strongest language; and, both by his precepts and example, to adorn and strengthen the bonds of social order and polity. WHEN I SERIOUSLY REFLECT ON THIS MATTER, and consider how many great men in the Church have failed in this very point, I do not hesitate to affirm distinctly, that no human care or diligence alone could have been equal to this effect; but that there must also have been a divine principle which illumined and directed his mind, and preserved him so constantly within the proper limits of his duty.

"'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's,' was his constant exhortation: in other words, Worship God in true penitence, and in an open avowal of the truth, in true prayer and in a conscientious discharge of duties: and obey with reverence and in the fear of God all the civil regulations of the community to which you belong. These were the very rules to which Luther himself

adhered in his practice. He gave to God the things which are God's. He taught the Truth, and he offered up his prayers to God on right principles; he likewise possessed the other virtues which are pleasing to God. Lastly, as a citizen, he avoided every thing that had the smallest tendency to sedition. These virtues rank so high in my estimation, that in this life, I think, greater accomplishments cannot be desired.

“ But while we praise the excellencies of the man who made so becoming a use of his heavenly gifts, it is our bounden duty to give particular thanks to God, that he hath been pleased, through Luther's means, to restore to us the light of the Gospel, and it is also our duty to preserve and spread the doctrine which he taught. It is this doctrine which must guide our prayers, and even our whole lives. It is this doctrine, of which the Son of God says, ‘ If any man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.’ ”

“ In fact, a false philosophy, and the succeeding errors of Pelagius, had exceedingly corrupted the pure faith of the Scriptures. St. Augustine was raised up by God to restore it in a measure; and I doubt not but if he could now judge of the controversies of the present age, he would be decidedly with us.

“ With my whole heart, I pray to the eternal God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for his own and his Son's glory, he would collect together the Eternal Church by the voice of his Gospel: and may he direct our wills by his Holy Spirit, and preserve in its purity that doctrine which he hath revived among us through the ministry of Martin Luther!

“ The Son of God himself prayed, ‘ Father, sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.’ To this prayer of our high priest we would add our own petitions, That true religion may ever shine among us and direct our lives. These were the daily prayers of Luther; and continued to be so till his soul was called from his mortal body, which took place without struggle in the sixty-third year of his age.”

The reader has now before him the SUBSTANCE of a considerable part of Melancthon's account of Luther, written very soon after the death of that Reformer. The known integrity, piety, and moderation of the writer, render his Preface to the second volume of Luther's Works peculiarly valuable. An exact translation was deemed unnecessary. It was thought better to condense the MATTER into as little room as possible, and not to interrupt the detail of the biographer by introducing any particulars from other authorities. The facts, which were already mentioned in the preceding History, are in general omitted in these extracts. A trifling repetition sometimes could not well be avoided, and will be excused by the indulgent reader, on

account of the instructive remark or opinion which accompanies it. The positive judgment and declaration of Melancthon, whenever they can be had, respecting the circumstances or events in which he himself was immediately concerned, cannot fail to be instructive.

But in this instance, as in many others, it has unfortunately happened that those passages of this little tract, which are most deeply practical, and which peculiarly relate to Luther's penitential convictions, and to his progress in spiritual understanding, during the earlier years of his religious course, have been almost entirely overlooked by historians and memorialists. The consequence has been, that certain precious fragments of the secret thoughts and practice of the Reformer, though authentic beyond all dispute, are scarcely known among protestants in general. The pious and enlightened reader of every denomination, will no doubt be gratified in seeing them brought forward and recorded here.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Melancthon, in another place, has given a very decided testimony to the talents of Luther.

"Pomeranus," says he, "is a grammarian, and explains the force of words; I profess logick, and teach both the management of the matter, and the nature of argumentation; Justus Jonas is an orator, and discourses with copiousness and elegance;—but Luther is OMNIA IN OMNIBUS, complete in every thing; a very miracle among men; whatever he says, whatever he writes, penetrates their minds, and leaves the most astonishing stings in their hearts."

The same author assures us that he often found Luther at prayer, with vehemence and tears imploring God for the whole Church. He daily set apart a portion of time for reading psalms, and for earnest supplication; and would often say, he was not pleased with those, who, through indolence or a multiplicity of employments, contented themselves with mere sighs instead of actual prayers. Forms of prayer, he said, were prescribed to us by the will of God; that the reading of them might warm our affections, and that our voices might profess aloud the God whom we serve and implore.*

The religious student of Ecclesiastical history naturally finds himself interested in every event where Luther is materially concerned. This does not arise from curiosity alone. Much light is often thrown on the characters of eminent men, from a knowledge of their conduct under peculiar or extraordinary circumstances, provided the facts be but stated with accuracy.

The various accounts of authors, respecting the immediate

* Melch. Adam.

incidents, which determined Luther to retire from the world into a monastery,* agree in the main, but not precisely in every circumstance. It is very remarkable, that Melancthon, who speaks of the occasion of this sudden resolution, as a thing which was well known, and which he himself had heard Luther relate, is not only silent concerning any storm of thunder and lightning, but, as we have mentioned above, expressly says, he does not know by what accident Luther's companion was killed. The story of the thunder-storm appears also to have had little weight on the mind of Melchior Adamus :† Yet, from the very respectable evidence collected by Seckendorf and others, the most probable conclusion seems to be,

1. That Luther's companion was not killed by lightning, but murdered by some unknown person who left him miserably bruised and wounded. His name is said to have been Alexius.

2. That Luther himself, while walking at a distance from house or town, was so alarmed by a storm of thunder, that he fell upon the ground, and in that situation made a sort of vow to lead a monastic life in future, if he should be delivered from the impending danger.

3. That he afterwards considered this vow as binding on his conscience, which was at that time in a remarkably tender state.

4. That soon after these events, which took place when he was about twenty-one years of age, he called together his particular friends and fellow-students, and entertained them in his usual way, with music and a convivial treat ; and when they had not the smallest suspicion of his intentions, he besought them to be cheerful with him that evening, for it was the last time, he said, they would ever see him in his present situation, as he had actually determined to begin the monastic life. In the morning he wrote farewell letters to them ; and sent his parents the ring and gown which belonged to him as Master of Arts ; and at the same time he unfolded to them in writing the grounds of his resolution. They grieved excessively that so great talents should be buried in a state of almost non-existence. But for the space of a month nobody was admitted to speak to him.‡

GEO. SPALATINUS. Pages 432, 433.

George Spalatinus appears to have been one of the most intimate friends of Luther. He was of all others the person, to whom the Reformer, in his greatest difficulties and dangers, entrusted his most secret feelings and designs. Spalatinus by his good sense, his opportunity of easy access to the elector of

* Page 427 of this Vol.

† Who wrote the lives of the German Divines who promoted the Reformation.

‡ Seck.—Luth. Ep.—Melch. Adam.

Saxony, and his sincere attachment to Luther, was, on many occasions, useful to the cause of the Reformation in general, as well as to his friend in particular.

A private epistolary correspondence between the two seems to have been frequent and uninterrupted during many years: and as the historian frequently refers to certain parts of it, which are extremely interesting, the following short account of Georgius Spalatinus himself may have its use.

He was a Franconian of considerable learning and great discretion. He was about a year older than Luther, but appears not to have begun the study of divinity, with any degree of earnestness, till he was more than thirty years of age. He requested his friend to give him his advice concerning the best method of acquiring sacred knowledge. The answer of Luther on this occasion well deserves to be remembered and practised by every student in divinity. After recommending to his notice certain parts of the writings of Jerom, Ambrose, and Augustine, he exhorts him always to begin his studies with "SERIOUS PRAYER;" for, says he, there is really NO INTERPRETER OF THE DIVINE WORD, BUT ITS OWN AUTHOR. He adds, READ THE BIBLE IN ORDER FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE END.

Luther, in his letters to Spalatinus, addresses him, sometimes as Librarian, and sometimes as Registry of the Elector of Saxony, but takes care, at the same time, to call him Minister of Jesus Christ. In fact Spalatinus was both secretary and privy-counsellor to the elector; he accompanied him to several German Diets; and at his court, he preached and performed the duties of domestic chaplain.* A stronger proof of the high estimation in which he was supposed to be held by Frederic the Wise needs not to be adduced, than that, in the year 1519, the pope himself, Leo X. condescended to write a letter to his BELOVED SON GEORGE SPALATINUS, in which, after acknowledging, in the most flattering terms, the great influence and weight which Spalatinus had with the elector, and how very much that prince valued the prudent and wholesome advice of his secretary, he exhorts him "in the Lord, and with his paternal authority requires him, to contribute every thing in his power to repress the detestable temerity of Brother Martin Luther, that child of Satan, whose grievous heresy was spreading among the credulous people."

In the affairs of religion, Spalatinus used all his influence to strengthen the party of Luther; but he was often so vexed and even dispirited on account of the little attention that was paid to his own ministerial exertions, that he seriously thought of quitting his situation at the elector's court. Luther opposed this intention in the most animated and decisive terms: "Take care," said he, "that you get the better of these thoughts which harass

your mind, or, at least, learn to dismiss them. You must not desert the ministry of the word of God. Christ has called you to his service. Yield yourself to his good pleasure. At present you do not understand the importance of your situation; you will understand it better by and by. The desire you have to quit your post is a mere temptation; the reason of which, we, who are spectators, see better than you do yourself. In a case of this sort, you should rather trust the judgment of your friends than your own. We are the means, which, on this occasion, the Lord uses for your comfort and advice. We call God to witness, that in wishing you to continue in your vocation we have no other object but his WILL and his GLORY. I consider it as a certain sign of your ministry being acceptable to God, that you are thus tempted. If it were otherwise, you would not be weary, and deplore your unfruitfulness; you would rather bustle, and seek to please men, as those do who talk much, though they were never sent with a commission to preach the Gospel." . . .

On the same subject Luther writes thus: "You ask my advice, my dear Spalatinus, whether you should quit your situation at the elector's court. This is my opinion. I own there is reason in what you allege. 'The word of God is disregarded.' And it is a wise rule, 'not to pour out speeches where there is no attention.' But I say, if there be ANY persons that love to hear, you should not cease to speak. I myself acted on the principle which I now recommend to you; otherwise I might long ago have been silent amidst this prodigious contempt of the word of God. Therefore, I affirm, that unless you have some better reason, which lies heavy on your conscience, this perverse and unreasonable inattention of wicked men is not a sufficient cause for your leaving the court. Consider of how much service you may be to many, from the weight of your influence with the prince, and from your long experience of the ways of courtiers. Whatever may be the abilities of your successor, Frederic the Wise will not trust him much, till time has furnished proofs of his integrity. On the whole, I cannot so much as conceive any reason that will justify the step you speak of, but one, namely, marriage. Stay, therefore, where you are; or if you do depart, let a wife be the cause."

Spalatinus continued in his employments until his death, which happened in his grand climacteric, sixty-three, in the year of our Lord 1545. Great grief and depression of spirits are said to have hastened his end. There is extant a most judicious, consolatory letter, which Luther wrote to him the preceding year, and which gave him much comfort. Spalatinus, it seems, through ignorance or inadvertency, had consented to the illegal marriage of a clergyman of bad character; and the matter hung heavy on

his mind. 1. Luther wisely cautions his friend against giving way to too much sorrow. He was well acquainted, he said, with the dreadful effects of it. He had felt those effects in his own case; and he had seen them in the cases of others. He instanced Melancthon, who fell into a most dangerous disease, owing to great grief. He then takes up the case at the worst, namely, on the supposition that Spalatinus had been really much to blame in the affair; and shows that still he ought not to despair of the grace of God, who was ready to pardon not only the slight faults, but the most grievous sins of the penitent. He tells him, that formerly he himself had been in a similar affliction of mind, which had brought him to the very edge of the grave; but that Staupitius had been of great use to him, by saying, "You are endeavouring to quiet your conscience by considering yourself as a slight, outward, superficial sinner; but you ought to know that Jesus Christ is ready to save the greatest and the vilest of sinners." Lastly, Luther, as a kind brother, exhorts him in the sweetest and most emphatical language to derive his comfort from a view of the gracious Redeemer.

Thus we find Luther always the same man. Exercised in the school of adversity, he feels for others. Naturally tender and grateful, he loves his friends, and administers every comfort in his power. His eye is always fixed on the next world; and the proper business of THIS life, with him, is the care of the soul. The account just given is an admirable specimen of his talents as a spiritual adviser. How many, in a like case, through a mistaken affection, or through fear of giving offence to an aged, dying friend, would have contented themselves with saying nothing but "smooth things"* concerning human infirmity, general sincerity, and the venial nature of sins of inadvertence, &c. But Martin Luther, though behind no man in compassion and benevolence, kept two things constantly in mind, the glory of the Redeemer, and the salvation of men's souls. Hence, on these subjects particularly, he always spoke without disguise.

ERASMUS. Page 489.

It is a most unpleasant circumstance belonging to the history of this great man, that the longer he lives, the lower he sinks in the estimation of the Christian reader. It is in the beginning of the Reformation, while he was exposing the scandalous practices of the indolent, debauched, avaricious clergy, that he appears to the greatest advantage. But when Luther and his associates began to preach boldly the Gospel of Christ in its purity, Erasmus instantly shrunk; and not only ceased to be a coadjutor of the Reformers, but became gradually their peevish and disgusted adversary. With inconceivable address and management, he

* Isa. xxx. 10.

steadily trode, as long as he could, his favourite middle path of pleasing both sides; but when the contention grew sharp, when the doctrines of Grace were found to offend the great and the powerful, and when persecution was at the door, the cautious evasive system was no longer practicable; Erasmus was called upon to decide; and there could be little doubt to which party a character of his stamp would incline.

When we divest ourselves of prejudice, and view Erasmus as the most elegant scholar of his age, admired and courted by Princes, Popes, and dignified Ecclesiastics, we are compelled to admit, that his temptation to support the established hierarchy was very great; and it is to be lamented that he had not a clearer and a more affecting insight into the deceitfulness of the human heart. If he had understood more of men's natural alienation from God by the FALL, and had had a deeper practical sense of the evil of sin in his own case, he would have felt weary and heavy laden; he would have sought more diligently for deliverance from internal guilt and misery; he would have been more disposed to resist temptations of every sort, and particularly those sins that easily beset him; and lastly, though he might still have differed from Luther in subordinate matters or modes of expression, he would have had the same general views of the nature of the Redemption by Christ Jesus; and instead of raising captious objections against the doctrines of Grace, and quarrelling with the man, whom Providence had ordained to be the instrument of their revival, he would have applied those blessed healing truths to the distresses of his own conscience, and would have rejoiced in that "burning and shining light" which arose amidst the thick darkness of Papal ignorance and superstition.

In one word; the different sentiments, which these great men entertained of the leading doctrines of the Gospel, was the real cause of their unhappy contention; every circumstance of which may be traced to this single source. And no wonder; for it seems almost impossible that a warm and cordial attachment should long subsist between persons, who zealously support contrary notions of the way of eternal salvation. It is true, that where the natural tempers are mild and ingenuous, many causes of irritation might be avoided or suppressed; and it is true also, that where Divine Grace is powerful, the affections of meekness, kindness and forbearance, will abound and be in vigorous exercise. But after all that can be said or imagined, there will still be such an essential difference of the spiritual taste, such an opposition of the judgment, and such a dissimilitude in the whole turn of thinking, that separation, not coalescence, dissension, not agreement, is to be looked for under such circumstances.

One cannot reflect on these things without much concern. The cause of disunion, here pointed at, is of very extensive operation in practice, and might be exemplified in many lamentable

instances, as well as in the unfriendly strife between Luther and Erasmus.

This third volume, together with the subjoined Appendix, contains ample materials to enable the reader to form a judgment both of the soundness of Luther's Christianity, and also of the earnestness with which he taught his doctrines. Every thing that is to follow concerning him, is altogether of a similar description with what has gone before. With intense study and with fervent prayer, he searches for light, and he attains it: Faithful to his convictions, he speaks without disguise; he exerts every nerve in support of Christian truth and Christian liberty; and as he is engaged in a contest which he considers as the cause of God, he is ever ready to hazard all that in this life is dear to man.

From the foregoing observations concerning Erasmus, and also from what is advanced in the Preface, the student of the History of the Church of Christ will be led to expect FURTHER documents relative both to his religious sentiments, and to the part which he acted during the progress of the Reformation. The facts which are at present before the reader, it must be owned, do not convict that cautious and artful disputant, of any decided opposition to a change in the Ecclesiastical system, or of any settled alienation of mind from the Reformer. On the contrary, they must rather be considered, in the main, as favourable both to Luther and to his doctrines. Yet enough has appeared already to raise considerable suspicions respecting the stanch orthodoxy of his faith, and the honest simplicity and disinterestedness of his intentions.

In the fourth volume we shall endeavour to throw light on these matters. At present we conclude with the substance of a passage extracted from one of his little controversial tracts. The quotation, though but short, is of itself sufficiently characteristic to furnish satisfactory evidence, that Erasmus differed very materially from Luther, in his ideas of the importance of certain scriptural doctrines, and also of the existing contest with the Romish hierarchy.

"If," says he, "I were called upon to suffer for the truth of the Gospel, I should not refuse to die; but as yet I have no disposition to suffer death for Luther's paradoxes. The present disputes are not concerning articles of faith; but, whether the pope's supremacy is of Christ's appointment; whether the order of cardinals is a necessary part of the church; whether there is Christ's authority for the practice of confession; whether free-will contributes to salvation; whether faith confers salvation;* . . . whether the mass can in any sense be called a sacrifice: On account of these points, which are the usual subjects of the scholastic contentions, I would neither endanger my own life, nor venture to take away the life of another. During our

* Conferat salutem.

endless quarrels, whether any HUMAN WORKS should be denominated good, the consequence is, we produce no good works. While we are contending whether faith alone without works confers salvation,* we neither reap the fruits of faith, nor the reward of good works. Besides, there are some things of such a nature, that, though they were ever so true, they ought not to be mentioned in the hearing of the populace; for example, That free-will is nothing but an unmeaning term; That ANY person may do the office of a priest, and has the power of remitting sins, and of consecrating the body of our Lord;—That Justification is by FAITH ALONE;† and that our works are of no use for that end. What can be the effect of throwing out such paradoxical doctrines as these before the vulgar, but schism and sedition.”‡

This language is so perfectly intelligible, that it cannot be necessary to add any remarks by way of elucidation.

* Conferat salutem.

† Solâ fide conferri justitiam. opera nostra nihil ad rem facere.

‡ Erasm. Purg. ad exp. Hutten.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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with a point, whether any one would be disposed
 to do so. The consequence is, no good result.
 While we are contending whether it is better to
 have a point, we are neglecting the point of fact, and the
 result of good work. But, there are some things of such
 a nature, that, though they are ever so good, they ought not
 to be introduced at the point of the population; for example,
 that there will be nothing but an unnecessary loss; that
 persons may be the object of a point, and not the power of good
 work; and of course, the body of our Lord;—That
 justice is by reason; and that our work is of
 no use for that end. What can be the effect of throwing out
 such fundamental principles as these before the subject, but to show
 and nothing.

The language is so perfectly intelligible, that it cannot be
 necessary to add any remarks by way of explanation.

* Confess your sin.
 † Hold this against judgment, open hearts still and true hearts.
 ‡ Hence, I say, as a Christian.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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Milner, Joseph

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